

# Arctic Security in International Security

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## Abstract:

Peace and war in the Arctic security is driven by international systemic forces of great power conflict. Since the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) the geostrategic role of and thinking about the North Atlantic Arctic has been stable. The Napoleonic Wars, Crimean War, World War I and II and the Cold War affected the Arctic for geostrategic reasons. Current and future Arctic security reflects the post-Cold War international system, a resurgent Russia and the rise of China. The Arctic is not exceptional, and Arctic conflict based on competition for natural resources made accessible by climate change is unlikely.

## Introduction: Arctic security determined at the international system level

This chapter argues that Arctic security (defined here as peace and war between states) has historically reflected international security at the international system level. Peace and war in the Arctic today and in the future is likely to continue to be determined at the international system level. Local and regional factors are unlikely to determine peace and war in the Arctic today or in the future.

This international systemic argument runs counter to much contemporary popular and scholarly commentary and analysis that warns of potential conflict in the Arctic driven by improved access to natural resources because of climate change and diminished ice on sea and land. This argument also runs counter to "Arctic exceptionalism", that a peaceful and cooperative Arctic today is an exception from international politics. A peaceful and cooperative Arctic reflects the place of the Arctic in the international system as much as heavy combat or excessive militarization of the Arctic does.

This chapter focuses on security at the level of peace and war between states, so traditional national security. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind how the connection between outside great power conflict and national security forces at play in all of the eight Arctic states have had far-reaching consequences for Arctic human security in multiple dimensions. High intensity combat or excessive levels of militarization have adversely affected Arctic local and indigenous communities, families and individuals. These impacts include forced displacement, cultural and linguistic intrusion, assimilation policies, crime, corruption and pollution (Gjørsv et al. 2014)

The focus of the chapter is to argue through historical cases, followed by analysis of the current and evolving international system, that peace and war in the Arctic is determined at the systemic rather than local and regional level. This chapter focuses on the place of the Arctic in a Euro-centric and since WWII, US-centric international system. The historical focus is therefore on the European and North Atlantic Arctic, rather than the Eurasian and Pacific Arctic. These regions were later integrated because of systemic developments. The systemic forces at play in the international system today is the twin power transition from Western states to Eastern states and from state to non-state actors

(Nye 2011). The other force is the return of Russia as a more typical great power, after a couple of decades of artificial relative weakness (Mearsheimer 2014, 77-89).

There is a popular and scholarly argument, that the Arctic in recent decades has gained the world's attention, primarily because of climate change. According to this argument, the Arctic was previously much more isolated from outside attention and influences. This line of thinking is well illustrated by the refrain "what happens in the Arctic, does not stay in the Arctic". This saying refers to the effects of climate change in the Arctic on other regions of the world, but the saying also ignores the strong external influences on the Arctic, especially in the social, economic and political spheres (Borgerson 2008, 63-77).

For centuries, if not millennia, the Arctic has been a part of larger social systems. The Nordic and North Atlantic Arctic has been a part of European affairs since the Viking age between 800s and 1100s. Indigenous peoples migrated and traded in and out of the Arctic much earlier, but that issue is beyond the scope of this chapter. European society, economy and politics spread to the White Sea and across the North Atlantic via the Faroes, Iceland, for a time Greenland and briefly North America, through Viking migration and early state-formation in Iceland and Norway. Russian state formation and transcontinental colonization and eventually North American (Alaskan) colonization integrated the Russian Arctic and Alaska via Russia into the international system. British and French North American colonization brought the rest of the North American Arctic into this Euro-centric international system. France colonized Canada as New France, while the Hudson Bay Company was set up in 1670 to bring Canadian furs (an extractive industry) to markets in Europe (Heininen and Southcott 2010, 320).

## The Arctic in great power geostrategy for 250 years

Anglo-French great power competition is a good starting point for illustrating how peace and war in the Arctic has time and again reflected great power conflict at the systemic level, rather than local and regional factors. The Seven Years' War, 1756-1763, is perhaps the world's first global conflict, since it involved European great powers, and it was fought on all continents, except Antarctica. The war also affected the Arctic directly, with deep long term social, economic, political, cultural and linguistic consequences. France was forced to cede New France (Canada) to Britain, a move which continues to shape Canada today in multiple ways.

The geostrategic role of the Arctic was also illustrated in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War. In 2005, the University of Iceland, the Icelandic government and City of Reykjavik celebrated the 75-year birthday of former president of Iceland Vigdís Finnbogadóttir with the international conference *Dialogue of Cultures*. Here, Dr. Anna Agnarsdóttir presented from archival work in the French Ministry of Defense a secret memo after the war to the Duc de Choiseul, minister of foreign affairs and for the navy, and close confidant of Louis XV. In this memo, the French navy was extremely concerned about having lost its access to the North Atlantic (via Canada). Therefore, the French navy suggested to the minister for the King of France to propose to the King of Denmark-Norway to exchange Iceland for Louisiana, then a vast North-American territory. Iceland would serve as a naval strongpoint to threaten both British Canada and Scotland (Agnarsdóttir 2005; Einarsson 2005).

The memo from the French navy is an excellent illustration of the geostrategic importance of Iceland. Either the offer was never made from the king of France (who may have valued Louisiana economic interest higher) or not accepted in Copenhagen. However, the 1800s and 1900s geostrategic history of the North Atlantic also clearly shows that Britain would never have accepted Iceland as a French naval strongpoint in the North Atlantic in Britain's backyard. Such a French-Danish-Norwegian exchange would have immediately caused war with Britain and likely British de jure or de facto control over Iceland

## The Ideas of the American and French Revolutions and the Road to North Atlantic Micro-States

Today, the politically most dynamic part of the Arctic are the Faroe Islands and Greenland, which are relentlessly pursuing independence from the Kingdom of Denmark inspired by the ideas of the American and French Revolutions of national identity and national sovereignty and also indigenous rights.

The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars shaped the current North Atlantic Arctic. Denmark-Norway was a major seafaring nation with one of the world's strongest navies at the time. Denmark-Norway sought to stay neutral in the Napoleonic wars, but ultimately failed. The strategic genius of Admiral Lord Nelson was to defeat the three peer-competitor navies of the time in three separate battles, the French navy at the Battle of the Nile (Aboukir Bay) in 1798, the Danish-Norwegian navy at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801, and the French-Spanish navy at Trafalgar in 1805. The remaining Danish-Norwegian Navy was subsequently removed by the Royal Navy in 1807, after the terror bombardment of Copenhagen (Munch-Petersen 2007; Glenthøj and Rasmussen 2007, 275).

The loss of the Danish-Norwegian Navy in 1801 and 1807 meant the immediate loss of Danish-Norwegian access to and control of its North Atlantic possessions, Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, which Denmark has de facto never regained. Greenlandic society was cut off from Western supplies, and had to revert to pre-contact harvesting techniques (Markussen 2017). A Danish adventurer and revolutionary, Jørgen Jürgensen, took power in Reykjavík declaring an independent Iceland, imprisoning the Danish governor, Count Trampe. Jürgensen's rule continued for 100 days until he was arrested and removed by the Royal Navy (Mentz 2018). This de facto British sphere of influence in the north Atlantic continued to WWII, when it was replaced by an American sphere of influence, which continues to this day.

National-liberalism, the ideational effect of the American and French Revolutions continues to influence the world and the North Atlantic today: the idea of national identity and national sovereignty vested in the people. In the 1830s, Icelandic students and intellectuals in Copenhagen became captivated by these ideas as the Danish intellectuals around them. The old Danish (-Norwegian until 1814) kingdom was a multiethnic, multilingual state of Danes, Norwegians, Germans in the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, Iceland, Faroe Islands and the colony of Greenland and some small tropical colonies. This absolutist state could exist regardless of identity, language and common identity. Ideas of national identity and sovereignty will eventually dissolve such a state either peacefully or violently. The creation of the Danish democratic nation-state with the 1849 constitution immediately led to the first Schleswig war (1848-1850), when Germans in Schleswig-

Holstein rebelled. Denmark won this war, but it laid the foundation for the catastrophic Danish defeat in the 1864 second Schleswig war against Bismarck's Prussia.

In 1845, the Viking age Icelandic Althingi assembly had been reconstituted as one of the consultative assemblies of the absolutist Danish king. In 1851, the Danish governor of Iceland, another unfortunate Count Trampe, tried to make the Althingi adopt the new Danish constitution for Iceland, making Iceland an integral part of Denmark. This was successfully opposed by the leader of the Icelandic independence movement, Jón Sigurðsson, a lifelong scholar in Copenhagen. This set the stage for Iceland's independence political struggle, a separate constitution in 1874, home rule in 1904, sovereignty as the Kingdom of Iceland (in union of shared monarch with the kingdom of Denmark) in 1918, and the Republic of Iceland in 1944. The declaration of the republic in 1944 was in accordance with the 1918 union law, but was badly received in Denmark, which was under German occupation.

The next great power conflict to affect the Arctic was the Crimean War, which is thought-provoking in light of the current Ukraine and Crimea crisis between the West and Russia. The Crimean War has an often overlooked dimension of British-French naval forces operating against Russia in the White Sea and the Baltic Sea (Rath 2015). In the aftermaths of the Crimean War, Russia decided to sell its loss-making North American colony of Alaska to the USA rather than Britain (Canada), its recent enemy in the Crimean War. This transaction between Russia and the USA, naturally made the USA an Arctic state (Office of the Historian nd).

## The Geostrategic Position of the North Atlantic and Arctic in Two World Wars

The 1900s is the story of the key geostrategic position of the North Atlantic and the Arctic, as set out by the French navy after the Seven Years' War. This position led to high intensity combat at sea, on land and in the air, and excessive levels of militarization even in peace time, with profound effects on Arctic local and indigenous communities, families and individuals.

World War I was the first industrialized total war, where the polities of great powers fought for life and death and where four such polities, the German, the Austro-Hungarian, the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, succumbed. This total war and the upheavals profoundly affected the Arctic. Germany and Britain as part of the total war imposed naval blockades on each other. The British naval blockade of Germany meant that Denmark again lost its connection to the North Atlantic, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland. The North Atlantic became very visibly a British sphere of interest. During World War I, Faroese and Icelandic fish export and trade became much more oriented towards Britain, which contributed to dissolve political and economic ties between Denmark and the North Atlantic (Jensdóttir 1980; Jensdóttir 1986; Thorhallsson and Joensen 2015, 187-206; Bjarnason 2016).

Tsarist Russia, pounded into eventual collapse and revolution by Germany and Austro-Hungary founded the port city of Murmansk in 1916 to ensure shipping connections to its Western allies. The October Revolution would later affect the Soviet Arctic profoundly. The revolution also had an Arctic and Barents dimension in that North Norwegian ports became hotbeds of revolutionary publication activity being distributed in Russia through historical Pomor trading and shipping networks between

Northern Norway and Northwest Russia (Nielsen 2015, 136-172). The Bolshevik revolution sparked the Russian civil war, where the Western Allies intervened. American and British forces intervened in the White Sea region and fought Red forces there between 1918 and 1920 (Hudson 2004).

World War II would affect the Arctic even more than previous global great power wars. When World War II broke out in September 1939, Britain again imposed a naval blockade on Germany, sealing off the English Channel and the North Sea. This unravelling security order reached the Arctic, when the USSR attacked Finland in late 1939 and the two fought the Winter War on their common border from the Arctic coastline to the Baltic. With the Winter War, Finland lost its corridor to the Arctic Ocean, Petsamo, that it had had since independence in the aftermath of the October Revolution.

German-British/French competition over the strategically important North Swedish iron ore resources around Kiruna brought World War II to the Nordics and the Barents Arctic. During winter, the Bay of Bothnia and parts of the Baltic Sea are ice-covered making shipping difficult or impossible. Therefore, the iron ore railroad was constructed in 1904 across the mountains from Northern Sweden to the North Norwegian port of Narvik, which is always ice-free. Germany was dependent on shipments of the Swedish iron ore for its armaments industry. In the spring of 1940, Britain and France tried to stop these shipments by laying mines in Norwegian waters, despite the protest of the neutral Norwegian government.

This British-French-German struggle over these seaways led Germany to invade Denmark (as stepping stone) and Norway on 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1940. The Norwegian government resisted the German invasion, and quickly British, French and free Polish forces intervened in the war in Norway. The German forces around Narvik were cut off because of British naval superiority in the North Atlantic and were near defeat by the allied land forces. Germany pressured Sweden into allowing covert resupply of the encircled German forces by Swedish rail and the iron ore rail road. This Swedish acquiescence caused long Norwegian resentment of Sweden after World War II, but it reflected Sweden's highly exposed geostrategic position towards Germany, which dominated the Baltic Sea region.

The successful German invasion of the Lowlands and France in May 1940 and rapidly deteriorating situation for the allies there, forced them to withdraw from Norway ensuring German conquest of all of Norway. With Germany capturing the Norwegian coastline, British control of the North Atlantic was deeply threatened. Britain moved quickly and decisively in its North Atlantic de facto sphere of influence and occupied the Faroe Islands on 11<sup>th</sup> of April and Iceland on 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1940. The foresight of the French navy after the Seven Years' War still stood.

Greenland was again cut off from Denmark, and Danish colonial legislation authorized the two governors of North and South Greenland to govern Greenland independently in such circumstances. These two comparatively young Danish civil servants divided the task between them, so that Eske Brun stayed in Greenland as overall governor and Aksel Svane went to the USA to represent Greenland there and secure supplies for Greenland in exchange of cryolite minerals mined in Greenland. Cryolite was important in aluminum production, which again was crucial for airplane manufacturing, another example of an Arctic natural resource of strategic importance in a given technological context (Brun 1985).

Danish ambassadors in allied capitals declared their temporary independence from their king under Nazi occupation in Copenhagen, most notably Henrik Kauffman in Washington DC and Count Reventlow in London. On 9 April 1941, one year after the German occupation of Denmark, Kauffman and the USA entered a defense agreement concerning Greenland, which gave the USA access to establish an enormous strategic infrastructure of air fields and other installations in Greenland (Lidegaard 1996, 811).

On 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1941, the USA replaced Britain as the protective occupier of Iceland, which was five months before Pearl Harbor and US entry into WWII (Corgan 2002). First the British occupation from May 1940 and even more the US occupation of Iceland from July 1941 had a profound social, economic, political, technological, cultural and linguistic impact on Icelandic society. Newly independent and sovereign Iceland had been very hard hit by the Great Depression of the 1930s. British (and later American) construction and other activity injected enormous stimulus into the Icelandic economy.

German occupation of Norway and subsequent use of Northern Norway as the launching pad for attack on Russia, is an example of how great power systemic conflicts acts forcefully on the Arctic down to community, family and individual levels. When Germany attacked the USSR, the USSR became an ally of Britain and soon the USA. Against the onslaught of German military and industrial might, the USSR became deeply dependent on supply from Britain and the USA. This supply by convoy was especially across the North Atlantic to Murmansk. The convoys stopped in Hvalfjörður or Seyðisfjörður on the West and East Coast of Iceland respectively. The allies created large supply and protective infrastructures in these locations. German planes flying from occupied Norway attacked Seyðisfjörður regularly to bomb allied ships.

The Battle of the Atlantic between German submarines and Allied convoys was the struggle to cut off or maintain these crucial strategic supply lines from North America to Britain and to Murmansk. Germany and the USSR were equally aware that if German forces attacking the Kola Peninsula and Northwest USSR from Finnmark in Northern Norway and from Lapland in Northern Finland captured or cut off the Kola Peninsula, it would cut off the convoys as effectively as sinking them out at sea.

Two other supply routes existed between the Western Allies and the USSR during World War II. One was via the Persian Gulf and Iran. The other was via Alaska and the Soviet Far East across the Bering Strait. The USA delivered aircraft to the USSR via Alaska. When Japan attacked the USA at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, it subsequently invaded the Western-most Aleutian Islands of Alaska. The USA and Japan fought the Aleutian campaign under Arctic conditions. The USA built up Alaska as a strategic base towards the Asia-Pacific region, which has new importance today because of the rise of Asia (Altunin 1997, 85-96).

## The Cold War and the Arctic

The defeat of Nazi-Germany, principally by the industrial might of the USA and the manpower of the Red Army, founded the bipolar Cold War international system. The Cold War deeply affected the Arctic – and again for geostrategic reasons that had little if anything to do with local or regional factors in the Arctic. The Cold War led to the most extreme and prolonged militarization of the

Arctic. Although no combat in the Arctic, the military buildup in the region had profound consequences on the culture, languages, health and environment of local and indigenous communities (Gjørsv et al. 2014).

The bipolar competition between the two superpowers also engendered intense scientific and technological competition. The USA had won the race to build a nuclear weapon and used it to force Japan to surrender during World War II. The USSR tested its first nuclear weapon in 1949 and won the space race to put the first satellite, Sputnik, into orbit in 1957 and the first human in orbit with Yuri Gagarin in 1961. World War II and subsequent advances in nuclear weapons, long-range flying, intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarines and submarine launched ballistic missiles put the two superpowers into striking range of each other. Nuclear powered submarines made it practical for infinite patrols and made it possible for submarines to hide under the Arctic sea-ice possible.

The world was caught in a balance of terror, and the Arctic was center stage in this balance. The transpolar route across the geographic North Pole is the shortest flightpath for long-range bombers or ICBMs between North America and Eurasia. From a NATO perspective, looking at the Warsaw Pact in Europe, Norway was the Northern Flank, Central Europe was the Central Front and the Mediterranean was the Southern Flank. Looking strategically at the USSR from the USA, Alaska was the Western Flank, Greenland was the Central Front and Norway and the UK was the Eastern Flank. The USA built a large strategic distant early warning infrastructure based on radar stations from the Cobra Dane radar in the Aleutians via Canada to the central Thule radar in Northern Greenland to radars in Britain and the Vardø radar in Northern Norway. The USSR built a similar warning and air defense system across the Soviet Arctic. The USSR/Russia has very limited all-year open-sea access, principally through the Kola Peninsula. Therefore, the USSR was and Russia today remains dependent on SSBN based deterrence sailing out of the Kola Peninsula, and to less extent, the Russian Far East. The USA, Britain and France have practically unlimited access to the open ocean for their SSBNs. The USA and NATO allies expended significant resources tracking and possibly countering these Soviet (Russian) submarine forces (Office of the Historian nd; Barnes 2017).

The Cold War geostrategic role of the Arctic between the USA and the USSR deeply affected Alaska and the Soviet Arctic. For instance, the “Ice Curtain” across the Bering Strait, separated indigenous people from family members on the other side (Ramseur 2017). The Cold War also deeply affected the other Arctic nations. The Cold War geostrategic role of the Arctic shaped the relationship between the USA and its three small Arctic NATO allies, the Kingdom of Denmark, Iceland and Norway: Greenland and the Thule radar for Denmark, the Keflavik base for Iceland and the Vardø radar and Northern Norwegian signal intelligence and hydrophone collection for Norway. Finland and Sweden, who link the Baltic and Barents Sea regions over land, jealously guarded their non-aligned status. This dynamic was part of the Nordic balance, where Denmark, Iceland and Norway were critical NATO members, Sweden and Finland non-aligned, and the USSR showed restraint especially towards Finland.

## The unexceptional post- and post-post-Cold War Arctic

For close to 30 years, we have enjoyed an Arctic of circumpolar cooperation (including Russia). This cooperation has given rise to an argument about Arctic exceptionalism - that the Arctic is decoupled from the international system and conflicts in that realm. It is useful to critically reevaluate such a

claim of Arctic exceptionalism, in order to better understand the place and role of the Arctic in the international system.

The foundation for the post-Cold War Circumpolar cooperation was laid in the last years of the Cold War and the USSR, when Mikhail Gorbachev gave his key speech in Murmansk in 1987, calling for the Arctic to be a zone of peace, environmental protection and scientific cooperation. This speech was a part of Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost policies of domestic reform and external opening, not least motivated by the extremely dangerous nuclear balance of terror (Issaraelian 1989, 61-70).

Finland as a small, non-aligned state with a difficult and dangerous relationship with the USSR 'caught the ball' and initiated the Rovaniemi Process in 1989, leading to the formulation of Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), which was adopted by the eight Arctic states in 1991. This process was in the context of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, the fall of Communist one-party regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the USSR. The Finnish initiative was the first in a line of small states or medium powers using the opportunities of less systemic constraints to use "softer" policies such as environmental cooperation to pursue foreign and security policy goals. Norway founded its own Barents Euro Arctic Council initiative in 1993. This initiative traces its roots to the successful management of Barents cod fishing by Norwegian-Soviet fisheries Commission, since 1974 (Jørgensen and Hønneland 2013, 353-376). The middle power, Canada took the Finnish process further by facilitating the foundation of the Arctic Council, by the Ottawa Declaration of 1996 (English 2013).

This harmonious Arctic circumpolar cooperation reflected an international system, where the USA was the unipolar hegemon and smaller Western states, even bordering Russia, had greater freedom of action. Russia was in an unprecedented social and economic crisis, which greatly diminished its power projection capabilities everywhere, including the Arctic. Today, the most important systemic processes in the international system of importance for the Arctic is twin power transition from Western states to Eastern states and power diffusion from state to non-state actors (Nye 2011) and the return of Russia as a more normal great power (Mearsheimer 2014).

## Russia and Arctic security today and in the future

What is striking when cooperating with Russian colleagues and students is the stark difference in the memory of the 1990s. For Westerners, the 1990s was an exceptionally positive era of European reunification, peace dividends, economic growth under the presidency of Bill Clinton, the internet, etc. For Russians, the 1990s was a decade of catastrophic social and economic crisis, rampant organized crime at all levels of society and withdrawal of the state and its services in many areas, not least the Russian Arctic. The current crisis between Russia and the West could perhaps be formulated as: The West cannot have the 1990s back, and Russia cannot have the USSR back.

The rule of President Vladimir Putin after the chaotic rule of President Boris Yeltsin, together with higher oil prices, strengthened the Russian state and economy. This transformation in Russian fortunes had widespread effects on Russia's behavior in multiple regions of the world. Because of Russian economic weakness and absence of soft power (an unattractive political and economic system), Russia lost its entire Cold War Central and Eastern European sphere of influence to



European unification in the European Union and NATO membership. Before 2008, Russia could not do anything about that, but it took decisive action against Georgia in 2008, crushing Georgian NATO aspirations. The Ukraine crisis from 2014 is a similar example of competition over spheres of influence between Russia and the EU and NATO, where Russia took military action, because it lacked the soft power or attractiveness of the EU or NATO (Mearsheimer 2014, 77-89).

The deep Russian-Western crisis over Ukraine (and Syria) has raised the question of the potential effects of this deterioration in the relations on the Arctic. Superficial analysis has asked whether Russia would act as assertively in the Arctic as in the Caucasus and Eastern Europe. That is a misguided question, since Russian action against Georgia and Ukraine was motivated by specific regional factors, which are not relevant in the Arctic. When there is proxy war in Eastern Ukraine and peace and cooperation in the Arctic, there is also a tendency to see the Ukraine crisis as the general situation, and the Arctic cooperation as the exception. This misperception may be more widespread in the small Nordic Arctic states, which may reflect a small state foreign and security policy experience. The Nordic small states are relatively very highly developed societies, but they are small states because of their smaller absolute capabilities in comparison with larger countries. The Nordic small states have limited engagements, interests and responsibilities, whereas great powers and the US superpower exactly has myriad engagements, interests and responsibilities around the world.

Great powers continuously consider whether to link or delink questions across functional and geographic domains. In the case of the Arctic and the Ukraine crisis, Russia has decided not to link the Ukraine crisis with the Arctic, which is to be expected, since Russia has no similar strategic problems in the Arctic as in Eastern Europe or the Caucasus. Russian is building up military capabilities in the Arctic, but here the great strategic and economic importance of the Arctic to Russia must be kept in mind, and this buildup must not be overestimated comparing with an artificial low in the 1990s. On the other hand, the West linked the Ukraine crisis and the Arctic, through targeted financial and technological sanctions against Russian Arctic offshore oil and gas activities. From a Western point of view, these actions make sense because they target a vital sector of the Russian domestic political economy (Farchy and Mazneva 2017; Konyshev, Sergunin, and Subbotin 2017, 104-124)

Before jumping to conclusions of Arctic exceptionalism in the current Ukraine (and Syria) crisis, it is important to keep in mind, how Russia and Western great powers compete and cooperate across different functional and geographic domains. The all-important US-Russian relationship is keeping a stable and secure strategic balance of nuclear deterrence, then nuclear non-proliferation, and space cooperation around the International Space Station, where the USA and everybody else depend on Russian rockets to reach the ISS. Germany continues to buy large amounts of Russian gas and collaborates with Russia on the construction of the Nordstream 2 gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea. The French oil and gas company Total is a key partner in the Russian Yamal LNG project. Britain may expel Russian diplomats in response to the poisoning of Skripal father and daughter, but the London real estate markets remains welcoming to Russian capital flight.

Russia remains dependent on submarine based strategic nuclear deterrent for its great power status, since the Russian economy at the size of Spain's is nowhere near great power status and is

unlikely to reach such a status. The Kola Peninsula will therefore remain the base of a large proportion of Russian strategic nuclear weapons, with large conventional forces to protect them. Russia will continuously seek to make these submarines more and more quiet, and the USA, Norway and other NATO allies will continue to expend significant resources to track these submarines anytime and counter them in wartime (Barnes 2017).

The Arctic may become an area of Russian-West conflict, but that will be if this conflict elsewhere escalates to a level which forces both sides to use the Arctic in the conflict, or if either side decides to move an overall conflict and competition into the Arctic area. There are no local or regional Arctic factors that can be expected to ignite a Russia-West conflict.

## The Return of Asia and its effects on Arctic security

The most important systemic development in international politics today is the return of Asia to its historical relative importance in the world economy. This development is also affecting Arctic comprehensive security today. Asia is predicted to take up more than half of the world economy by 2050 (Asian Development Bank 2011, 127). This gigantic economic shift drives the power transition from Western to Eastern states. Other great shifts are the diffusion of power from state to non-state actors and the proliferation of technology between states and from state to non-state actors (Nye 2011).

Asian interest and interests in the Arctic make sense in this larger context. Very large economies have global political, economic, scientific and security interests. Great Western powers have had that for centuries and nobody thinks anything of it. Today we must realize that very large Asian economies also have such global interests, including in the Arctic. The security dimensions of Asian interest and interests in the Arctic fall in the following areas, deterrence and missile defense, the Northern Sea Route and Sino-American competition in Greenland.

US Arctic strategic infrastructure from the Cold War has new important roles shaped by a new international system and new technology. Alaska's geostrategic position towards Asia-Pacific is today shaped by proliferation of nuclear and ballistic missile technology to North Korea. Alaska plays a central role in US ballistic missile defense towards Northeast Asia (Mitchell 2018). The Thule radar in Greenland is today a part of US missile defense (The Associated Press 2004; Kristensen 2004; Kile 2004, 647-658), and the Vardø radar in Northern Norway may also be so (Higgins 2017; Sellevåg 2000, 26-29).

Russian energy and natural resources along the Northern Sea Route are being developed not least for the Chinese market and with Chinese capital as is clear from the Yamal LNG project (Farchy and Mazneva 2017). The Northern Sea Route as the Polar Silk Road is also the northern dimension of China's grand strategy of the Belt-and-Road-Initiative, where China as the continental power counters the USA as the maritime power (Johnson and Standish 2018). There seems to be much uncertainty in especially Western shipping circles about the Russian regulation of the Northern Sea Route. There is a unique maritime strategic aspect to the Northern Sea Route, which is at the basis of this unease, but never acknowledged explicitly. The Northern Sea Route is the only major international water way which is not controlled by the US Navy (and historically the Royal Navy).

Having a major international water way which is not dominated by the Western hegemon of the international system will be a major change.

The Faroe Islands and Greenland are moving towards eventual independence from Denmark. China is also becoming engaged in Greenland. The Sino-Greenlandic relationship is causing concern in Denmark. There are stereotypical paternalistic, post-colonial voices fearing that the cunning Chinese will cheat or corrupt the impressionable Inuit without the parental, post-colonial oversight of Denmark. Such voices will be ignored here for unprejudiced concerns. The great importance of Greenland to the USA since at least World War II has been pointed out above. The USA and China are competing on a global scale, and the USA is heavily present close to China and Chinese core interests as the South China Sea. China may decide to respond by seeking an economic, political, scientific and cultural presence close to the USA and where the USA has important strategic interests, such as in Greenland. All societies around the world, including Greenland, are rapidly developing their political, economic, scientific and cultural relations with China (soon to be largest economy in the world). Greenland, Denmark, the USA and China must avoid unintended conflicts in this process (Sørensen 2018, 1-6).

## Conclusion: Arctic Security was never about the Arctic and will not be in the future

This chapter argues that Arctic security has historically been driven by forces at the international system level, the rise and fall of great powers and the wars between them. In the future, Arctic security as peace and war between states is likely to be driven at the international systemic level. This argument counters the idea of Arctic exceptionalism, and that Arctic peace and cooperation is an exception from the ongoing Ukraine crisis between Russia and the West. Heavy fighting or excessive militarization of the Arctic has had highly detrimental effects on the human security of Arctic local and indigenous communities, families and individuals. The small Nordic Arctic states and local and indigenous populations have been powerless against such forces. Perhaps a better understanding of how breakdowns in the international order and outbreaks of great power wars far from the Arctic spread to the Arctic can contribute to the resilience and human security of Arctic local and indigenous communities.

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