

# Arctic Policy Development Factors

## A: Geopolitics

The increasing accessibility of the Arctic Ocean has renewed the IR theory of Geopolitics - the concept of the Eurasian landmass dominated by Russia. Mackinder in the C19 had not anticipated accessibility to the Eurasian landmass/Russia via the frozen Arctic. This reality now heavily influences RF's strategic perception of the Arctic Ocean and its own national security, sovereignty, and response to Arctic globalisation

The Arctic is a location of huge natural resources. Nuclear weapons are regularly deployed and tested in the region. It geographically and economically links past, present, and possibly future, Superpowers (USSR, USA, China)

In terms of Arctic policy a vital question is whether strategies will be based on geopolitical drivers or a comprehensive new Treaty, or even an adaptation of the existing Antarctic Treaty; all of which will effect the AC's present governance status.

President Gorbachev opened the Arctic debate in Murmansk in 1987 by appealing to the West to consider jointly, the Arctic as a "Zone of Peace for all nations". Today's AC is the direct inheritor as a Forum of that East /West agreement. However by mandate

## B: Strategic & Security

Arctic is still a strategically vital arena for launching a nuclear exchange. National security remains paramount for Arctic governments and countries such as UK, where threats to stability and security in the Arctic are emerging from various actors. The nature of emerging threats are not confined to military activity, but geoeconomic and governance issues as well.

Challenge to national security posed by inevitable international access to the region that Arctic globalization will accompany. Polar Code may defray some of these concerns.

Clarity and leadership required to differentiate between Securitisation and Militarisation of Arctic sovereignty, territory, and resources. Similarly the re-classification of the European Arctic as the emerging Eurasian Arctic raises strategic, governance, infrastructure, and trade questions.

Discussion as to whether militaries/Navies or Coast Guard and Border Guard services are the most appropriate forces (equipment, training, staffing) to provide security (HSE/SAR etc) to international industry groups operating in national and international Arctic waters

Role of NATO in Arctic: e.g. offering services to western AC members Vs operating in Arctic with non-NATO, and non-Western economic partners. Legal, national security, commercial and insurance implications. Most recently the relationship between space and the Arctic region has emerged as a matter of Superpower concern & competition. This includes issues of a claim to a global commons' domain, the use of satellite directed media technologies influencing regional/terrestrial governance institutions, and the lack of agreed international law determining strategic/geoeconomic activities from space - to the

issues of Arctic security may not be discussed within the Forum.

The emergence of the Arctic as a new global trade route (via the NSR linking Europe with Asia) may shift the balance of power in the Arctic and perhaps globally too, as there is increasing Chinese involvement. Increasing external (Asia/EU) and internal (AC countries) discussion to avoid tensions underway. Moreover the classification of the European Arctic is increasingly outdated and misleading. With Chinese/Asian presence in the region - and as Permanent Observers to the AC, the European Arctic is in fact better described now as the Eurasian Arctic.

Three factors of key importance for region to \_ achieve globalization location and ownership of resources; layout and control of trade routes; stability of state boundaries

The Arctic is presently of extreme geopolitical interest; theories of IR are being challenged (Treaty/law/power), changing status of some Arctic countries related to IP/EP/SD (Iceland, Greenland), methods of inter-nation negotiation (MO: consensus not agreement (eg Nor/RF's Barents Sea deal,) arena for an emerging China to flex power, etc.

Arctic region(s). This risks instability and insecurity in the region unless key players decide a code of conduct for both the Arctic and the space-Arctic related domain.

The U.S. now considers the Arctic, Eurasia (where the Arctic also dominates the North of that continent) and the Indo-Pacific as the key emerging geopolitical regions in the C21. All three will be contested strategically, economically, and politically by both the U.S. and China, along with significant participation from Russia too.

Presently the security on offer for the Arctic Ocean is beyond the scope, planning, and resources of all Navies/Coastguards. This has SD and EP implications and will effect industrialisation and investment in the Arctic. It is fundamental for facilitating Arctic policy development Latest SAR plan may reduce risk



## C: Globalization

Inevitability of occurrence due to (1) potential new global (shorter) trade routes, and (2) accessibility of significant mineral, hydrocarbon, and fishery resources. Further accelerated by political desirability of independence (Greenland), attraction (+finance) of non-Arctic nations, and improved technology and comms reducing costs and effects of terrain

However: Rate of globalization may vary within and across the N.American and European Arctic - in line with climatic impacts and the countries' adaptation and mitigation strategies

Nature of Arctic globalization will largely be determined by strict Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development guidelines, as set out by the AC

Arctic globalization may result in emergence and growth of global Northern cities and ports such as



## D: Governance & Sovereignty

Sovereignty mainly unchallenged and governed by inter/national laws and UNCLOS and CLCS. However 4 Boundary disputes still outstanding (Nor/RF-USA/Can-Denmark/Can-USA/RF). AC's Governance may now be challenged by NATO following events in Ukraine. Additional competing governance systems in the region are emerging, including from BRICS' countries and the EU.

Vast majority of mineral/hydrocarbon resources in European Arctic located within national EEZs (250 miles), that do not threaten national jurisdiction

Legal arguments about status of Svalbard are typical of European Arctic sovereignty disputes and are of long standing and to date have had no urgency; this is now changing as a result of environmental/climate change and effects on geography - and therefore sovereignty (vis- Nor/RF agreement over Barents Sea boundary after 4 decades)

## E: Science & Technology

Research and Development vital to fundamental understanding of Arctic and key to formulating Arctic policies. For example the nature, rate, and cause of permafrost melt is crucial for planning and engineering of on/offshore infrastructure projects, geo-engineering concepts and life support in the High North.

Required technology for operating in the Arctic is already at the outer limit of scientific research, invention and engineering.

Data and analysis is presently very rudimentary in many parts of European Arctic; effects on policy,

Murmansk, Novy Urengoy, Surgut, Archangel'sk, Churchill, Hammerfest, Nuuk, Whitehorse and Yellowknife. One major challenge (especially with a more assertive NATO in the region since 2023) is a form of rapid geoeconomic regionalization required in northern Sweden, Finland, and Norway, in order to power up regional manufacturing in the North and thus populate the area(s) with both a workforce - and subsequent growing permanent Northern communities.

Major challenges to globalization: lack of infrastructure (onshore/offshore): SAR capability across the region; poor communications of all types; and lack of clear governance and sovereignty leadership/frameworks that are/have not adapted fully yet to major changes in climate, security, geopolitics/governance and technological advances.

Governance is determined by individual Arctic countries; via national legislation, and by UNCLOS. Other options include a proposed Arctic Treaty (EU Parliament, but now withdrawn), an international space for benefit of all mankind (China). Main governance actor in Arctic is AC, representing the 8 Arctic countries. However real power is asserted by the 5 "Arctic Rim" countries (USA/CAN/RF/Nor/Den(G'land))

Emerging external (non-Arctic countries) challenge to governance and sovereign rights (not sovereignty per se) based on argument that as Arctic is the fundamental determinant of global weather/climate, and has an environmental/social impact across globe, it thus requires an international input and voice

Many issues of enforcement, key economic/social/commercial responsibilities and legal framework(s) for governing in European Arctic, to date unresolved.

strategy and investment

This is an area for huge expansion with inputs from academia, private agencies, laboratories, industry, and national governments. Much of this work will be collaborative due to complexity, costs, and access required in national territorial waters.

Polar institutes emphasise and research science, social science (IP culture, reindeer culling etc.) but are only now developing geopolitical, economic and strategic think tank capacity

## F: Environmental Protection (EP)

EP is one of the Founding Principles of the Arctic Council (and its precursors) and its prime position is part of the AC's original mandate as the International Arctic Forum

Most significant physical state change on earth is occurring in the Arctic Ocean. Effects being felt within and without the Circumpolar North

One of the key factors for Greenland's independence aspirations and a key criteria for assessing Iceland's EU membership bid. Climate adaptation is being

planned for by Greenland, as mitigation strategies are less sustainable or of decreasing applicability in light of rapid physical changes

Hugely sensitive cultural issue viz - Canadian and Danish/Greenlandic reaction to Seal hunting ban by EU

Evidence of EP & SD being used as political tools by governments to gain resource access, defend sovereignty, and create a level commercial playing field in the European Arctic.

## G: Sustainable Development (SD)

SD is one of the Founding Principles of the Arctic Council (and its precursors) and its prime position is part of the AC's original mandate as the international Arctic Forum

SD (and EP) is the agreed benchmark for the industrialization of the Arctic. This will include all major infrastructure, on/offshore, development of NSR/NWP and all commercial/ industrial projects

Management systems (ecosystems-based) developed specifically for Arctic operations - Statoil's management systems for operating in Barents and Norwegian

seas is well respected and is now being shared with its Russian partners. May be the benchmark adopted for the Arctic oil industry in time.

SD is the factor about which Arctic states and Arctic IP society will have to work hardest and in collaboration

Emerging factor that impacts SD is increasing shortage of skilled Labour in European Arctic. Opportunities elsewhere for skilled personnel, conditions, training and pay are having an effect on policy/planning and operations, especially in NW Russia



## H: Indigenous Peoples (IP)

The Arctic's Indigenous People's represent the major weather vane for change in the global status of aboriginal people in C21. Increasingly vital voice in governance and economic development of region. However the Nordic IPs face some challenges as Indigenous women are seeking higher education qualifications and working in mainstream economies of the North. This has precipitated some internal domestic challenges within the IP community.

Permanent Observer status in Arctic Council. Represented by various national and Circumpolar Indigenous People's forums, such as ICC. Opinion and interests taken very seriously by European Arctic states.

Traditional knowledge and experience hugely valuable for climate adaptation and \_mitigation strategies (at

international level) as well as local knowledge and survival techniques, as Arctic begins to globalise in C21.

Significant implications for international relations around world if say, Greenland achieves independence. This will be world's first IP country with the full, legal signatory authority of a state.

The Arctic is the home to IP people and they live off the land/sea of the region. This is their sole means of livelihood. IP do not see the Arctic as many other stakeholders do (as globalization arrives) as a Laboratory, Frontier Region, or Science Park. However like all peoples IP are looking towards change and development and therefore welcome and encourage collaborative partnerships. These are especially crucial for new entrants to the Arctic.

ARCTIC



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