

REPORT



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# Danish-Russian Interfaces: the Arctic and the Baltic Sea Region



Russian International  
Affairs Council



DET UDENRIGSPOLITISKE SELSK  
THE DANISH FOREIGN POLICY SOCIETY

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**RUSSIAN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL  
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While the Arctic is currently undergoing a significant transformation as a result of climate change and global political processes, remains a region of low tension in Russia-West relations, the Baltic Sea region is of a more complex nature. To address the evolving challenges and overcome the differences in perceptions of the Arctic, the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russia Federation need to elaborate on the common understandings of the Baltic and Arctic security architecture.

A joint report by the Russian International Affairs Council and the Danish Foreign Policy Society provides an analysis of shared challenges and interests between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russian Federation in the Arctic and around the Baltic Sea. The publication aims to identify areas of common ground between the two sides in order to broaden cooperation and to address the arising challenges in both regions.

The Russian International Affairs Council thanks **V. Druzhinina** for her help in preparing the publication.

The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of RIAC.

The full text is published on RIAC's website. You can download the report or leave a comment via this direct link:

**[russiancouncil.ru/en/report54](http://russiancouncil.ru/en/report54)**

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction: the Arctic and the Baltic Sea region: interfaces between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russian Federation</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Security architecture in the Baltic Sea region</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Baltic security: from managing confrontation to a new security architecture</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>What is the Arctic to the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russian Federation?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Russia and regional and non-regional actors in the Arctic</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Climate change in the Arctic with respect to Russia: on geoengineering</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>About the Authors</b>	<b>48</b>

# Introduction: the Arctic and the Baltic Sea region: Interfaces between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russian Federation

Per  
Carlsen

The Danish Foreign Policy Society decided a year ago to arrange a Danish-Russian conference. In Moscow, Andrey Kortunov, Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council, suggested to us that each institution should identify researchers to present their take on the Baltic and Arctic security architecture as background for the conference.

Here are the results: 5 papers of different size and substance, which correlate well with the purpose of this conference. The papers depict a picture of shared challenges and interests between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russian Federation in the Arctic and around the Baltic Sea.

**Søren Liborius** touches upon the many institutions existing in the Baltic Region not being used effectively by decision makers, due to reluctance to cooperate after the Russian aggression in Crimea and Ukraine.

**Roman Maika** views the Baltic Area from Moscow, but reaches the same conclusion. He still hopes that small steps within confidence building and renewal of emergency lines of communication between militaries on both sides can prevent armed conflict and unforeseen escalation.

**Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen** compares the Nordic-Russian cooperation in the Arctic with the Danish-Greenlandic-Faroese cooperation with Russia, and believes that Denmark can learn a lot, especially with regards to People-to-People contact.

**Natalia Viakhireva** agrees that scientific cooperation is a possibility between the two nations; as is environmental protection and maritime safety. She believes that cooperation on the Arctic could serve as a good example of interaction in the period of crisis.

Finally, **Mette Skak** finds that the interdependence created by the climate crisis between the entire Arctic region and the Russian Federation may be utilized as a platform for climate dialogue about best practices within climate change mitigation between the parties.

# Security Architecture in The Baltic Sea Region

Søren  
Liborius

*The security architecture, both hard and soft, in the Baltic Sea area is now rather diverse; almost all pan-European, regional and sub-regional as well as Euro-Atlantic structures and organisations are present in the Baltic region. This dense architecture provides an ample number of fora to discuss and manage security challenges. The question is, however, if this density of organizations and structures can or will be engaged by all the members, the states around the Baltic, to reduce tensions – or if the Baltic area is becoming a kind of hostage to rivalry and strategic competitions elsewhere.*

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the 1990s witnessed busy collaboration in the Baltic region between the erstwhile members of the Eastern bloc and the Western states. The fields of contact and collaboration included many sectors of society from state-to-state projects in public administration, security, business development, environment protection, education, science and culture – just to mention some. Private sector contacts, trade, investment and entrepreneurship developed.

Structural reforms and modernisation of the legal frameworks in the former Eastern bloc states enjoyed wide support in the affected states. There was a general desire to re-establish contacts, which had existed up until the Second World War, but were broken by its consequences. Popular curiosity toward the neighbours ran hand-in-hand with the political openings. New visions for collaboration, integration and contacts found broad political consensus. New organisations were founded to stimulate the contacts. In the Baltic Sea Region, not only OSCE and EC (now EU) were engaged, but new ones like the Council of the Baltic Sea States, The Baltic Development Forum and others were founded. Existing organisations had their mandates broadened like the Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers. Significant financial and human resources were engaged to re-connect the Baltic Sea Region. Multilateral instruments including from the EC (EU), as well as nationally funded projects, developed.

Russia represented a particular situation due to her size. In terms of collaboration with the Baltic Sea states, the Russian regions from Murmansk in the north over Saint Petersburg to Kaliningrad in the south were engaged in the contacts.

The societies of the former Eastern bloc changed fundamentally. In many respects, the “mission was accomplished” with the integration of the new members of the EU and NATO, not least according to their national priorities. Russia pursued her own development outside the EU and NATO, and did not seek membership of these organisations.

With a proliferation of organisations and structures in the Baltic area, there is a competition among organisations for political and economic attention of the national governments who in turn have reduced their financial commitments over

the years to activities in the Baltic Sea Region. The reasons behind this reduction from higher levels during the 1990s are first and foremost that the primary tasks are considered achieved and crowned with the EU-membership of Poland and the Baltic republics. Secondly, Russian average income levels have developed, and Russia no longer qualifies as low-income country according to UN- and OECD-criteria. This has a limiting effect on public funding decisions in several capitals. However, the fact that Russia is a member of several of the Baltic Sea organisations make them attractive to the other states as venues for keeping contacts and connections open – especially as other dialogue fora with Russia experience difficulties.

Aside from developing cooperation among own members, the question for many organisations active in the Baltic Sea Region also became ‘how to relate to Russia?’ For Russia, the question was ‘how to work with the other states of the Baltic Sea Region in the organisations where Russia is a member?’

Currently, while relations between Russia and EU/ NATO – as well as bilateral ties – are strained, the question in a wider context is therefore: What can be derived from the former close collaboration in the Baltic Sea Region? This paper seeks to trace and analyse these relations.

The question is also whether time has run out for some of the organisations. The dwindling budgets could illustrate a declining interest in operational activities. However, the fact that Russia is a member of several of the organisations make them attractive to the other states as venues for keeping contacts and connections open - especially as other dialogue fora with Russia experience difficulties. The dilemma is that the prevailing situation illustrates a simultaneous readiness to maintain the organisations, yet not to equip them with robust budgets and staff to roll-out ambitious programs and activities. Do the budget reductions reflect a long-term loss of political interest? Is there a growing political fatigue with Russia in most Western capitals?

Has an until-recently lower-tension in the Baltic Sea Region allowed for a reduction in interest and attention, which is now manifesting itself in an absence of common projects and contacts? Can a refocusing of attention and increased will to launch common projects linking people and professional communities perhaps stimulate engagement and help lowering or preventing tension? Could contacts and working through EU-affiliated projects be explored further (e.g. in the field of science cooperation)?

Are commercial contacts between Russian and Western stakeholders contributing to lowering tension, or is the difference in economic systems of a such character that this difference in itself will reduce the volume of contacts and contribute to tension? As part of this dilemma: Will increased energy inter-dependency contribute to a situation with potential security risks? If so, how can existing security structures be mobilised to mitigate such risks?

## Hard Security Structures

### NATO meets Russia

Since 2004, the main feature of the Baltic region has been that Russia's borders meet the borders of NATO- and/or EU-member states. The current security architecture reflects the changes during the 2000s – in particular the 2004 enlargement of NATO and EU. These changes came after we during the 1990s had seen a proliferation of Baltic-regional structures which were established to help the transition from the collapsed Soviet Union and to speed up the integration with the Euro-Atlantic structures NATO and EU.

Russia had also stepped up its alliance-building, so the change of security architecture away from individual states with no or limited alliance participation into a situation of direct contact of blocs is particularly strong in the Baltic states. Many smaller states in the Baltic Sea Region felt a security deficit and imbalance before becoming NATO-/EU members. For the NATO-members, hard security issues are mainly anchored in this organisation. Sweden and Finland have a developed set of relations with NATO, but do as non-members not benefit from the Article 5 cover, nor from participation in the NATO/Russia Council (NRC). Even if the NRC has seen a reduction in the frequency of meetings and a set-back of trust after the Crimea annexation and conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the body still functions.

Sweden and Finland are not NATO-members, but EU-members, and pursue a policy of maintaining very close contacts to NATO, including military-to-military and being long-term participants in several NATO-led operations. The domestic debate about NATO-membership shows a direct link to the level of tension elsewhere in the world. When the confrontations in Eastern Ukraine since 2014-2015 reached a level similar to that of a low-level war, the NATO-debate ran high in both Sweden and Finland with a noticeable popular opinion swing towards membership preference. For Russia, the Swedish close relation to NATO has become a focus of criticism with persistent demands for Swedish neutrality.

The calibrated NATO footprint in the Baltic States, with enhanced forward presence (EFP) of other NATO-member troops supplementing the national defence forces of the Baltic republics, is designed to carefully manage the Western security posture in the region with an expressed desire to avoid having large permanent units stationed at NATO's Eastern border. Despite statements to the contrary, it appears that Russia accepts and is relatively content with the footprint of NATO troops, as long as they are kept in low numbers and NATO head-quarters are of a moderate size.

### OSCE and CoE

The role of OSCE in the Baltic is limited. All the states in the Baltic Region are members of the OSCE and the Council of Europe (CoE). Occasional election observations take place like in other parts of the OSCE area. However, only rarely are Baltic issues as such on the agenda in either of the two organisations. The



issues of soft security, internal minority or democratic rights are not very prominent (any more), or those issues which merit discussion are handled in other fora. As an example, the minority issues in the Narva-region were the subject of OSCE engagement in the 1990s. Kaliningrad cross-border issues were addressed in the EU/ Russia format before and are now mainly handled in direct bilateral contacts.

There appears to be less space and readiness in the Russian system for assigning a special role for Kaliningrad. Special economic zones are not so special any more in offering investor or business attraction, compared to other Russian regions. The neighbour regions in Lithuania and Poland seem to have developed those economic contacts to Kaliningrad which are possible in the current situation.

### **CSTO**

As Russia's main political-military bloc and regional security organisation, there are active Russian efforts to establish a format where CSTO and NATO discuss security issues. However, this has not yet materialised. One of the suggested reasons is the mismatch between the two organisations in terms of structure, mandate and purpose. Russia has been unable to convince the NATO-neighbours of the benefits of establishing yet another forum for contacts.

The underlying reason stems from the interest-based relationship dominating such international contact: Why should NATO grant a Russian wish and enter into what many would consider just another talk-shop providing little concrete progress or conflict-solving potential, which UN, OSCE or the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) cannot provide? Other factors act to discourage contacts: in CSTO's relative few years of existence, internal conflict for influence has dominated more than political or operational success. Secondly, the body is largely seen as Russia's counterweight to China in the quest for balancing power in Central Asia, rather than an operational security player in the wider Euro-Asian area.

Further, it is highly doubtful whether eventual NATO-CSTO contacts or negotiations would add any dimension to managing security issues in the Baltic Sea Region. The airspace and waterway are international and cannot be restricted only by the littoral states. Eventual ideas of creating rules and regimes giving exclusivity to the littoral states parallel to the Black Sea are destined to be rejected internationally.

### **Soft security structures and regional cooperation**

Alongside the hard security domain, there has been a proliferation of organisations and structures in the sphere of economic, environmental, cultural and social cooperation. They have contributed to the soft security and the integration of the states in the wider region and wider Europe.

### **EU**

Even if the drive to becoming EU-members was – and is – primarily economic, there is also a significant dimension of enhanced broader security which is

derived from not only the mutual security clause of the Lisbon Treaty<sup>1</sup>. Together with NATO-membership, the integration into the EU (the EFTA agreement in the case of Norway and Iceland) have been key factors for societal change and development of the member states. As for other regions in Europe, the effect in the Baltic Sea Region can hardly be overestimated.

### **Northern Dimension**

Is a policy mechanism sponsored by the EU to promote dialogue between EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland. The ND policy was initiated in 1999 and renewed in 2006. The policy aims at providing a framework to: "...strengthen stability, well-being and intensified economic cooperation; and promote economic integration, competitiveness and sustainable development in Northern Europe". The Northern Dimension is, however, currently not a very active platform.

### **CBSS**

The Council of the Baltic Sea States was established in 1992 as an overall political forum for regional cooperation to build trust and foster cooperation among the (mainly) Baltic Sea States with the members Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden and a representative of the EU. The purpose was to ease the transition to the then new emerging international landscape after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The organisation now focuses on themes such as societal security, sustainability, research and innovation, as well as countering human trafficking, but the focus is on cross-border environmental issues.

CBSS's footprint and project portfolio have been reduced over the years as other organisations, in particular EU, have entered the scene and member states shifted to this platform for cooperation.

"Any aspiration to develop the hard security domain was tried long ago without success."

### **The Nordic Council of Ministers**

Primarily for the intergovernmental cooperation in the Nordic countries, but also with a footprint in the Baltic region to pursue the political intention to reach out with wider cooperation in the region, including in Northwest Russia, – especially in the "softer" policy areas. It does not deal with hard security – for obvious reasons of the heterogeneous council where some are NATO members, others not; and some are EU members – others not. Any aspiration to develop the hard security domain – a closer Nordic defence cooperation – was tried long ago without success.

<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Lisbon strengthens the solidarity between EU countries in dealing with external threats by introducing a mutual defense clause (Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union). This clause provides that if an EU country is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other EU countries have an obligation to aid and assist it by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This obligation of mutual defense is binding on all EU countries. However, it does not affect the neutrality of certain EU countries and is consistent with the commitments of EU countries whom are NATO members.

The legacy of the Nordic Council of Ministers dates back to 1952; well before Denmark joined the European Economic Union. Things have developed since then. With the EU enlargement leading to the inclusion of many of the members, much of the cooperation is now also driven and codified inside the EU. But there is still an important area of cooperation in facilitating regional cooperation in several domains and being a driver or “laboratory” for new types of cooperation: Digitalisation, climate and energy, research and education etc.

Can the Nordic Council of Ministers contribute to cooperation in the wider Baltic region? Yes – but only to a limited extent when activities also include Russia. The reason for this assessment is the historic background. The Nordic Council of Ministers collaborates in several areas with the Baltic Sea states and has some cooperation with partners in Northwest Russia. In the Baltic states’ offices of the Nordic Council of Ministers work since more than 25 years ago. The two offices in the Northwest Russia, Saint Petersburg and Kaliningrad, were suspended in early 2015, following a dispute when the Russian Ministry of Justice announced that the Nordic Council of Ministers was to be considered as a “Foreign Agent” in Russia; a status not acceptable to the Nordic governments. In spite of this dispute, some joint projects continue and focus on the environment, democracy, education and culture. However, they are managed from other bodies and are now reduced in size, scope and outreach.

There is little evidence to suggest that the Nordic Council of Ministers’ offices in Saint Petersburg and Kaliningrad were the prime target of the Russian criticism. But as the process of ‘rooting out foreign influencers’ developed, the Nordic Council of Ministers seems to have become a collateral victim.

As the political relations between the Russian Government on one side, and Western governments/ EU and NATO on the other have continued to deteriorate as the war in eastern Ukraine developed through into 2015, a climate of mutual suspicion emerged. Western institutions, including NGOs and perhaps especially organisations in the “softer” policy areas, were considered by the Russian government as designed to undermine the Russian state’s policy as well as the patriotic mentality of the population and contribute negatively to society.

### **The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)**

The EAEU is the economic cooperation organisation with Russia as main player and Belarus as a member from the Baltic Sea Region as well as Armenia, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. As with the wish to see formal CSTO/NATO contacts, Russia is lobbying for formal contacts to be established between EAEU and the EU. However, for more or less the same reasons as with the CSTO/NATO, this intention has not yet convinced the EU of the benefits. For the moment, informal contacts to explore potential future relations seems to suffice.

“The scope of EAEU is limited.”

EAEU plays a limited role in the Baltic Sea Region. It is mainly an economic vehicle for the market integration of Belarus and Russia. Its potential to broker further contact in trade and investments between the EU and Russia (and Belarus) is limited by some key factors. Firstly, the scope of EAEU is limited. It does not negotiate external trade agreements; this is managed by the national governments. It has a limited organisational structure and is weak in dispute solving mechanisms. Secondly, the composition of the trade: raw materials and oil and gas dominate Russia's export, while manufactured goods dominate the EU's exports. The market is unregulated. If it was to become the subject of trade agreements, one could expect protracted tariff and quota negotiations. Thirdly, the actual trade policy is a limitation. As long as Russia maintains a set of "counter-sanctions" against EU countries – especially the Russian import ban on EU agricultural products – and promoting a general "buy Russian" policy in the domestic market, this issue will not be solved.

### **Types of risk and risk perception**

The West's view on Russia and Russian view on the West is a widening gap. The perception of growing divergence and mutual distrust is clear. Whether it is an engineered political design for domestic purpose or a genuinely felt security risk can be debated with statistics, numbers and events. What matters is the policy pursued.

Even if attempts to lower the Ukraine conflict are made in the Normandy-format and elsewhere, this conflict looms as the shadow in most of the potential proposed cooperation schemes or formats between the West (NATO/EU) and Russia. As long as Russia is seen as being heavily involved in sponsoring or sustaining the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, and while the annexation of Crimea remains as source of sanctions on the side of NATO and EU, there is a limit to how far Western capitals will agree to develop relations. Nobody expects a return to status quo ante. There may well be scope for more cooperation than by ultimo 2019, but less than before 2013/2014.

### **A 'New Normal' for relations – at a lower level**

There is a significant lack of trust in developing new partnerships or enter into new commitments, as compared to before 2013. There seems to be a lack of interest on both the Russian government's side as well as in the majority of Western governments.

The main reason for lack of enthusiasm in searching for new security cooperation between Russian and the NATO-members in the Baltic Sea Region is, from the Western side, the perception of Russia as escalating her military posture to rival the US and domestically developing a more authoritarian system. From the Russian perspective, there seems to be less focus on the Baltic Sea area, while great power rivalry and other international projects occupy the attention of Russian leaders.

The design and conduct of the annual Russian key exercises, the yearly "Zapad" send clear signals of building up an offensive and defensive capability with both

conventional and nuclear weapons in a European theatre. Russian naval exercises in the Baltic Sea have also seen a significant rise in recent years. By inviting China to participate in some of the naval exercises in the Baltic Sea Russia both delivers a “pay back” to the US’s traditional presence during annual NATO naval exercises, and introduces another element of great power rivalry, since China never before made military manoeuvres in the Baltic Sea.

The security risk was felt strongly by the smaller states around the Baltic Sea. This perception should be seen together with the feeling in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as Northern Poland which is connected to the Hanseatic Baltic Sea traditions. They are facing the sea rather than looking inland or facing East. This feeling – as well as economic expectations – is reflected in the many infrastructure connections being developed these years, linking Central and Northern Europe closer together: Rail Baltica, a standard European rail gauge; Baltic Electricity Grid, a Baltic/Polish/Scandinavia grid; and Baltic Pipeline, gas pipe between Norway-Denmark-Poland.

You cannot avoid looking to the countries in the Southern part of the Baltic Sea Region if you want to understand Baltic security developments. Poland, together with Sweden, was very active in promoting the EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood Policy supporting Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in getting closer to the EU. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were very supportive in this policy, which they felt was hindered by a ‘zero sum’-policy by Russia, trying to block further integration with Western Europe.

In the question about the construction of a gas pipeline directly from Russia to Germany in the Baltic Sea, Nord Stream 2, Poland and the three Baltic states were strongly against, not wanting to increase the dependency of Europe on Russian gas. But the policy was also motivated by solidarity with Ukraine, which stood to lose significant sums from the transfer of gas to the European market through Ukrainian territory. Germany, on the other hand, was supportive of Russia in establishing the pipeline and of increased Russian gas import to replace German nuclear or coal-based energy. The United States were supporting the Polish-Baltic point of view and also promoted US export of American LNG-gas.

### **No joint approach in the Baltic – mainly bilateral**

Compared to a couple of years ago, current key-note statements or policy indicators by senior Russian leaders do not contain clear and ambitious references or guidelines for a “re-start” of a common approach in the Baltic Sea Region. Rather, the Russian focus is on individual countries and how to develop bilateral relations. Among the other Baltic Sea states there is also a limit to the ambitions for joint cross-bloc-activity.

“The NATO–Russia contact is limited but existing.”

In the current situation, the prospect for enhanced cooperation is limited. The great power rivalry seems to have taken over the dynamics of relations. The

NATO-Russia contact is limited but existing. The US-Russia contacts are negatively affected by the crisis in international arms control, while the US attention is focused on China.

For the EU-Russia relations, a kind of 'new normal' has developed where the relationship is essentially one of economic interdependence; a set of economic transactional contacts pinned mainly on energy and raw material import from Russia and export of manufactured products from Europe.

The trade volumes between the EU and Russia continue to remain remarkably low. Even the booming days, culminating in 2012 with €339 billion, are in fact well below what one would expect from two neighbouring economic areas of such size, population and industry structure. In 2018, the trade volume only reached €253 billion.

However, the trade is still very important for both Russia and the European states. Energy is a crucial commodity for the European economies, and the export revenue is a key component of the Russian economy. It is no surprise that energy trade is outside the sanctions-/counter-sanctions regimes. Compared to the 2000s, the level of EU-based investments into Russia is significantly reduced. This indicates less attractiveness and trust in the prosperity of future economic relations and readiness to shoulder risks.

As to the development of political partnerships, there are limited prospects. The interest appears to be absent – for the moment – both on the Russian side and between the EU or NATO member states.

The formalisation among the EU member states of this situation is seen in the EU's 'Five Guiding Principles for relations with Russia', agreed in March 2016. The principles have proven to provide a flexible framework for the EU member states to maintain their core business and contacts with Russia in areas of their interest. There is no wish to cut the links between citizens and professional or scientific communities. This seems to be an area where relations could be developed with less problems.

### **The legacy of the 1990-2000s' collaboration**

A strong legacy across many spheres in both Russia and the other Baltic Sea states appears to be lingering across societal spheres. This legacy manifests itself positively even today in virtually all sectors of society: the public sector, private businesses, science and academia, civil society groups, mass media, culture, arts etc.

As mentioned earlier, several of the Baltic states had the EU and NATO memberships as their main foreign policy goal. A high degree of joint collaboration facilitated the changes which were conditional to join these two organisations. This is in itself a strong legacy.

“Several of the Baltic states had the EU and NATO memberships as their main foreign policy goal.”

You can argue that by creating a more homogenous group of states focused on economic development and close collaboration, a more stable international environment has been created in Central and Eastern Europe, including in the Baltic Sea Region. The wider Europe, including Russia, benefits from this stability. This is also a positive legacy in a Europe which otherwise has demonstrated a rich potential for conflict and instability. The many state-sponsored programs in support of reforms on different sectors stimulated personal contacts, business relations as well as the exchange of knowledge between institutions, private organisations and other groups.

However, the institutions are often not very strong in storing and taking in external experience, unless these inputs are operationalised for the institution's own tasks. Institutions are seldom "museums" or "archives" of the neighbour's way of life. Such experience remains within individuals while they perform a certain function. The collective memory stored in the multiple of thousands of persons is no small factor and can serve to galvanise against easy proliferation of stereotypes and attempts of alienation. But in order to have a sustaining effect, it requires maintaining and updating of personal and professional contacts before living memory is lost.

Another important legacy is found in setting the example of what can be the subject of collaboration and contacts – also with Russia. In a situation where the general political framework is less conducive for ambitious 'cross-bloc' contacts, it seems to be important to recall what was once the scope and level of contacts. Needless to say, as societies develop, so will the format and purpose of contacts. There appears to be no desire for nostalgic trying to re-invent the formats like TACIS-programmes of the 1990s. But less could do and still help maintain contacts for organising future security relations.

# Baltic Security: From Managing Confrontation to A New Security Architecture

Roman  
Maika

*The Baltic Sea Region has been the most difficult area for Russia to establish real relationships, although it is defining for Russia's relations to the EU and the West. In a situation of high tensions and low official collaboration, the increasing gap could be bridged by collaboration on a smaller scale within specific fields of common interest.*

The relations between Russia and the EU have reached a deadlock. The parties continue imposing sanctions and counter-sanctions; the policy of “selective engagement” presented by former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini does not work, and crises in Ukraine and Syria keep posing complications for both sides.

Relations between Russia and the Baltic region are of a more complex nature than the relations between Russia and Western Europe. The Baltic states are institutionally more dependent on the EU and NATO, and because of their history, they traditionally take a more cautious approach in relations with Russia. Interestingly, it has always been easier for Russia to establish fruitful ties with Western Europe rather than with its closest neighbours. Nevertheless, Russia is interested in establishing balanced relations with the Baltic states; otherwise, the EU will continue to view Russia as a problem and competitor. In other words, Russia considers the Baltic states as spoilers in the relationship, forcing the EU and NATO to take a negative view on Russia to base their Russia policies on a ‘lowest common denominator’ which consequently leads to an unambitious agenda and prevents breakthroughs. The Baltic states, in turn, also think that the West should have a tougher stance towards Russia, punishing it for the alleged “annexation of Crimea” and force the Kremlin to adhere to the so-called “rules-based world order”. The irony is that Moscow hopes Europe will change its strategy from ideological to a pragmatic approach based on big players interests.

## The Baltic Sea Region

Defining the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) may be problematic. It mostly depends on the tradition of the area of studies in a particular region and the context. However, the main area that theoretically can become a zone of confrontation between NATO and Russia is the three Baltic states Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In Russia, the term “*Pribaltika*”, which came from Soviet times and essentially meant the three before mentioned states, continues to dominate both the political and the expert discourses.

Russia keeps seeing these countries as a single international actor, despite any possible differences between them. However, Poland, Finland, Germany, Sweden, and Denmark, all bordering the Baltic Sea, are perceived differently in Russia and have different historical background. From a security point of view, these countries should not be excluded from the picture. They are crucial for the Baltic



Sea Region (BSR), due to the fact they are EU members and have close ties with NATO. However, Russia perceives those countries separately from the region because of the specific history and different experience of cooperation with Russia. Finland might be a great example of a balanced relationship with Russia. Even at times when interaction with the West was limited, Russia-Finland relations were functional in terms of, among other things, cross-border cooperation, scientific cooperation and maritime safety.

### **Narratives of conflict**

After 2014, the region became one of the main areas of confrontation between Russia and NATO. It is a fact that since 2014, there has been a notable increase in military deployments, exercises, and other military activities in the region. The Baltic Sea Region, especially the Baltic states, are quite sensitive to any contradictions and tensions between Russia and the West. As a result, any conflict situation outside of the Baltic region affects the relations between Russia and the Baltic states.

For the Baltic region, the most delicate issue is the Ukrainian crisis, which is very disruptive for Russia-West ties in general. It is also evident that the Ukrainian turmoil will continue to be a destructive element for Russia-West as well as Russia-Baltic relations. The most crucial part is that the situation in Ukraine has its own logic and it is not controlled by Moscow, or by Brussels, Washington, or even Kyiv. The actors of the conflict (including external ones) are now being hostages of uncontrollable circumstances, and no side can solve the conflict. The situation in Donbas remains the key stumbling block in Russia's relations with the West, and in particular with the EU, which has made the implementation of the Minsk agreements its definite condition for upgrading the relationship.

The main fear of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia is if Russia would invade them the way it did with Crimea under the pretext of protecting Russian-speaking minorities. However, the governments of the Baltic states understand that the possibility of Russian intervention is incredibly low. Nevertheless, the authorities are eager to promote such an agenda to extend military support from NATO.

Besides, such an agenda, which might even be a populist one, might be lucrative for politicians who crave to win local elections playing on the biggest anxiety of people. It can be a useful strategy to compensate for the lack of political identity in party politics in the Baltic states.

For the Baltic states and Poland, "dark Russia" is a part of the national narrative, where Russia is being presented as an absolute evil. The political identity factor here reflects the future attitude and policy towards Russia. On the contrary, the relations with Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany seem more mature, where Russia does not have such a strong negative national narrative.

Unfortunately, the same approach is getting more popular in Russia. Anti-Western propaganda is mainstream in the state-owned media. Poor media quality, post-truth policy, and fake news worsen the situation, leading to intellectual iso-

lation, where the truth is about the source, not about the facts. Nowadays, it seems almost impossible to change the official media agenda on both sides.

## Russia–NATO tensions

Security-wise, the situation in the Baltics is relatively calm, but people remain nervous. Similar to the Baltic elites, Russia’s establishment understands that the enhanced NATO presence in the BSR does not constitute any real threat to Russia, but it feels forced to increase its military buildup as far as the area is concerned. However, Moscow claims that Russia acts in its own right to pursue a security strategy on its territory according to the perceived threat by NATO. Russian Defence Ministry, Sergey Shoygu pointed out that since 2012, NATO had expanded its military contingent threefold. So, unsurprisingly, Moscow is very perceptive to such kind of military deployment, especially when it comes to Finnish and Swedish debates about their respective potential membership of NATO. Since Finland shares border with Russia, joining the Alliance would extend the Russia-NATO border.

“Security-wise, the situation in the Baltics is relatively calm, but people remain nervous.”

The situation is becoming even more complicated by the collapse of the arms control regime: the CFE Treaty (Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe) was abolished a long time ago, leaving the conventional arms situation unregulated. The collapse of the INF Treaty (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) adds a nuclear dimension to the situation. The turbulent character of world politics, the breach of trust between Russia and the West in general – and Russia and the Baltics in particular – creates a danger of miscommunication, misreading, and conflicts.

An important difference between Russia and NATO is the structure of the decision-making process and relations between the allies. While Russia is a sovereign state which makes foreign and security policy decisions swiftly and with regards to its own national and foreign policy interests, it takes considerably more time for NATO, due to its structure and principles of the alliance. Another issue is the budget asymmetries within the Alliance and the ongoing tensions between security-providers and security-consumers. The U.S. accounts for nearly 70% of the total spending on defence by all NATO members, the UK and France for more than 5.9% and 5.6% respectively and Germany for 4.8%. As for NATO budget contribution, the US contributes 22.1 % with Germany, France and the UK being second and third largest contributors with nearly 14.8% and 10.5% respectively. The remaining 25 member states spend only 13.7% on defence, although providing around 42% of the Alliance budget. Denmark is quite close to Germany in terms of spending in per cents of GDP, but the absolute amount is less. Poland also boasts impressive defence spending, which is quite noticeable for regional stability. However, the Baltic states and Poland are mostly security-consumers. While being crucial in terms of geography for the regional security architecture and

spending 2% of their GDPs on defence (in comparison, Germany spends 1.2% of its GDP), their proximity to Russia and the current tensions between NATO and Russia inevitably attracts much of the Alliance’s resources to this region.

“The Baltic states and Poland are mostly security-consumers.”

## **Security dynamics**

Russia’s “annexation of Crimea” and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine have significantly increased the complexity of the regional security dynamics. Before 2014, the intensity of military activities and deployments in the BSR remained relatively low. However, after the crisis, even Finland and Sweden were forced to make significant corrections in their security strategies in response to Russia’s policy, which is considered “aggressive” in the West. Both sides increased the scale of military exercises (Swedish Aurora 2017, West-2017 by Russia and NATO Trident Juncture ‘18). Military buildup and increased military activities in the BSR skyrocketed the risk of military incidents.

At the same time, Russia decided not to involve nuclear weapons in the crisis, which could have happened if Russia had decided to deploy nuclear weapons to Kaliningrad. Especially nowadays when the INF Treaty is withering, the Baltic NATO members can quickly become a platform for the deployment of middle range missiles in order to deter Russia. This would undoubtedly provoke Russia in tit-for-tat measures. It may lead to a shakier security situation in the region and possess risks on both sides.

“The Baltic countries consider themselves frontrunners in the field of cyber-defence.”

The situation is getting more complicated by the fact that OSCE has not become the key European security structure as originally intended. That could have prevented such scenarios in Europe. OSCE is fragile now, and NATO becomes only stronger, which makes the security dilemma in the region more complex. Now we can have an arms race, with the US withdrawal from the INF Treaty and further development of missile defence systems.

The situation is so unhealthy now that even if the Kremlin suggested a new arms control solution for the Baltic Sea Region, it would probably be met with suspicion. The main point would be that any regime proposed by Moscow, even if they are reasonable and comprehensive enough, are aimed to limit European forces and military capabilities in the region. Even though a regional security treaty is unlikely to be accepted, there are some possible opportunities for cooperation. For example, it could be additional bilateral or regional CSBMs (confidence- and security-building measures), or any other unilateral measures such as reducing the scale and amount of military exercises. Moreover, since politically motivated treaties are unlikely to work, discussion on arms control will focus on mostly technical elements of the existing treaties.

Another issue that affects the security dynamics in the region is the cybersecurity. The Baltic countries are aware of Russia's possible cyberattacks and consider themselves frontrunners in the field of cyberdefence and cyber deterrence. Following its vast experience in digitalization (NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Center of Excellence), the Baltic states, with Estonia as a pioneer, are becoming leading European countries in international cybersecurity, especially after the US accusations against Russia for disinformation campaigns and cyberattacks in the 2016 presidential election campaign in the US.

However, recently, the strategy has shifted from cyber defence to cyber deterrence. It is considered that in comparison to conventional warfare, cyberwarfare does not require expensive military equipment. In this regard, the Baltic states and Russia might be level when it comes to the quality and capacity of such weapons in potential hostile utilization.

Since the cybersecurity area is subject to limited legal regulation, the rules of conduct in this area are still unclear, and the attribution is complicated - these can quickly fuel tensions in the fragile security architecture. However, if some agreements can be achieved here, it might become a significant step forward towards new solutions in the region.

## Overcoming divisions

So far, the Baltic states have done much to show the world that Russia is a huge problem. At this point, it will require a huge mental leap on both sides to overcome current differences. The policy of "naming and blaming" each other did not work. To overcome the political division, the BSR countries and Russia should step out of their comfort zone.

On a more practical level, both sides should focus on managing the confrontation. This can be done through quick fixes like a renewal of emergency lines of communication between the militaries of both sides to prevent armed conflict and unforeseen escalation. As for political discussion, we need to avoid the most sensitive issues, focusing on something more feasible, like the development of civil society dialogue, maritime safety, and embarking on talks on new global challenges and threats. For example, cooperation with Estonia as a leader in the area of digitalisation could be a good starting point.

"Denmark, Finland, or Sweden, for instance, are less poisoned by the current toxic relations."

Now the relations between Russia and the EU are at an all time low, the official channels are quite limited, which provides an opportunity for the expert community to engage in dialogue and show the way. Expert tracks (1.5 or 2.0 Tracks) could bring together former officials and military experts from the BSR countries. Since Denmark, Finland, or Sweden, for instance, are less poisoned by the current toxic relations, the involvement of officials and experts from these communities could facilitate the dialogue.

# What is the Arctic to the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russian Federation?

Rasmus  
Gjedssø  
Bertelsen

*Is there a need and value of a common Danish/ Faroese/Greenlandic and Russian view of the Arctic? This paper seeks to examine and discuss to what extent the Kingdom of Denmark (Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the Russia Federation have different perceptions of the Arctic, and the needs and values of a common understanding of the Arctic between them.*

The Kingdom of Denmark and the Russian Federation are both among the eight Arctic Council member states and the five Arctic coastal states. The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia do not share a common land or maritime border as Russia does with Finland, Norway and the USA (Bering Strait). But the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are connected in the Arctic in different ways, which raises the question of their Arctic self-perception and mutual perception.

The paper will briefly outline the Arctic intersections of the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia, and how self- and mutual perceptions matter for these connections. The paper will outline what kind of Arctic states the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are, and what the Arctic means to them. The author is a Danish national, who lived in Iceland as a child, and is now Professor of Northern Studies and Barents Chair in Politics at UiT The Arctic University of Norway (Tromsø campus). Based on this background, I observe how the Nordic Arctic is divided into two Arctic regions with very distinct Arctic relations with Russia. These two Nordic Arctic regions have relatively little exchange and mutual knowledge.

The Barents Region of Northern Norway, Northern Sweden, Northern Finland and Northwest Russia is highly institutionalized with Barents Euro Arctic Council state and sub-state structures. Especially Norway invests significant resources in people-to-people relations with Russia in education, research, culture, environment, business, etc. The Barents Region is perhaps the highest developed Arctic region with about 1.6 million citizens in Northern Norway, Sweden and Finland in modern Nordic societies. Northwest Russia is highly urbanized and industrialized with, e.g. the largest city north of the Arctic Circle, Murmansk with about 300,000 inhabitants. The land and sea borders with Russia (former USSR) shape the region politically and strategically. The other Nordic Arctic region is the West Nordic region of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands (and by extension Denmark through the constitutional ties between Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland).

This is the Arctic for the Kingdom of Denmark and for Danish society. These are Nordic societies, but much smaller in population with 56,000 in Greenland, 333,000 in Iceland and 50,000 in the Faroe Islands. These are maritime societies. There are no land or sea borders with Russia.

Arctic perceptions and knowledge in the Kingdom of Denmark reflects the West Nordic region, which means that the Kingdom of Denmark lacks the deep con-

nections, experiences and knowledge of Russia as an Arctic state that is continuously built up in the Barents Region cooperation. Likewise, Russian public, private, academic and civil society Arctic actors do not have the familiarity and networks with the Kingdom of Denmark (and Iceland) in the West Nordic regions as in the Barents Region. This lack of Arctic familiarity, experiences, network and knowledge between the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia is problematic in light of the Arctic – and Baltic and other connections – between the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia.

The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are immediately both Arctic Council member states and Arctic coastal states. The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia also have overlapping continental shelf claims in the Arctic Ocean, which is pursued within the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia (historically USSR) are also connected in the Arctic at the strategic level. The Arctic plays a key geo-strategic role in the strategic (nuclear) balance between the USA and Russia (historically USSR). The transpolar route is the shortest flight path for bombers and intercontinental missiles. Russia depends on SSBN (nuclear-powered, ballistic missile-carrying submarine) based second strike capabilities in the Bastions around the Kara Sea and the Okhotsk Sea. The USA has since 1953 operated Thule Air Base in North Greenland, which was strategically located for mutual deterrence with the USSR and distant early warning radar.

The Thule Air Base is today an increasingly key sensor for US national missile defense. The Thule Air Base therefore ties the Kingdom of Denmark into a strategic balance between the USA and Russia with possible security dilemma dynamics with Russian high Arctic bases as Nagurskoye in Franz Josef Land. The recent debacle around President Donald Trump's idea to buy Greenland highlights the place of Greenland (and therefore the Kingdom of Denmark) in the US-Russian strategic balance.

In light of these Arctic connections between the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia, it is important that the two countries are familiar and knowledgeable about each other as Arctic states and have experience in Arctic cooperation and networks. This paper continues outlining what kind of Arctic states, the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are and finishes with proposals for increasing the mutual level of familiarity, knowledge, networks and experience – based on Norwegian-Russian Arctic relations.

## **What is the Arctic?**

There are different geographic (Arctic circle), botanic, climatic and political definitions of the Circumpolar Arctic. What is important to keep in mind as a starting point is the Circumpolar nature of the Arctic centered on the geographic North Pole, the Arctic Ocean and the surrounding landmasses in Russian, Northern FennoScandia, the North Atlantic, and North America. There are eight states in this area and who are the member states of the Arctic Council: the Russian Federation, the Kingdom of Denmark (Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland), Finland,

Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Canada and the USA. There are about 4 million people living in the Arctic of whom 10 % belong to indigenous communities.

One way to think about the Circumpolar Arctic, which is useful for a Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic-Russia discussion of the Arctic is the image of the four Arctics: the Russian (post-Soviet) Arctic, the Nordic Arctic, the North American Arctic and the Indigenous Arctic.

## **The Russian Arctic**

The Russian Arctic is clear cut, that is the enormous Russian air, land and sea space from the Bering Strait to the Barents Sea, which covers close half of the Arctic and about half of the Arctic population. The Russian Arctic includes the largest city north of the Arctic Circle, Murmansk with about 300,000 inhabitants. The Russian Arctic is the most industrialized and urbanized Arctic with significant urban centers as Murmansk and with industrialization around natural resources extractive industries.

“The Russian Arctic includes the largest city north of the Arctic Circle, Murmansk with about 300,000 inhabitants.”

What outsiders must always realize when considering Russia is its enormous territory and diverse population and society from the Far East, Central Asia, Caucasus, Europe and along the northern coastline. Russia connects geographically Northeast Asia and Northern Europe, which is geo-economically of central importance as will be pointed out in this paper.

## **Russian Arctic and strategy**

The Arctic is of central strategic and defense importance for Russia (and historically the USSR). The Kola Peninsula is Russia’s only year-round ice-free access to the open sea (unlike through the Baltic or the Black Sea). Murmansk was founded by Imperial Russia in 1916 in an attempt to ensure maritime communications with the West. During World War (the Great Patriotic War), Murmansk was the port of call for the Allied Arctic convoys from the UK and North America often via Iceland. Both the USSR and Germany were fully aware of this, so the USSR was also invaded by Germany from occupied Finnmark (Norway) and allied Lapland (Finland) trying to conquer or cut off the Kola Peninsula. The battle fields at Litzka between Kirkenes and Murmansk and Alakurtti between Lapland and the White Sea show this clearly.

In the Cold War with mutual nuclear deterrence between the USA and the USSR, the transpolar route was – and remains – the shortest flight path for long-range bombers and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs). The Soviet and Russian second-strike nuclear capability is largely based on submarines, SSBNs, sailing from the Kola Peninsula and in the Far East taking up “Bastion” positions under ice-cover in the Kara Sea and Sea of Okhotsk in the Far East. Today, as sea-ice along the Northern Sea Route (Northeast Passage) is shrinking and thinning

because of climate change, this both gives Russian surface vessels greater freedom to navigate between the Kola Peninsula and the Far East, but also opens up a new vulnerable front from Russia along its north coast. Russia/USSR has historically faced different threats from the east, south and west, but never had to worry about the northern coast line. The Kola Peninsula is also today a strategic base for projecting air and sea power to, for instance, the Mediterranean and Syria.

## **The Russian Arctic and geo-economics, natural resources and shipping**

Russia (and the USSR) has been and remain a resource-based economy, and the Russian Arctic plays a large role in the Russian natural resource-based economy. Russia is one of the world's largest producers of oil and gas as well as minerals, where large deposits are in the Russian Arctic. The Russian state is fiscally deeply dependent on natural resource rents, not least from the Arctic. Today, new natural resources extractive industries projects are developing in the Russian Arctic. Particularly note-worthy are natural gas exported as liquified natural gas (LNG) from Yamal and in the near future the nearby Arctic LNG2 and follow-on projects.

As mentioned above, for Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic readerships, it is important to keep the geo-graphical extent of Russia in mind. Russian geo-economic thinking is therefore also Eurasian in thinking across the vast space from the European Arctic to the Far East and stretching North-South from the Arctic Ocean to Central Asia. Russia has traditionally thought in these geo-economic terms as evident from, for instance, the Trans-Siberian Railroad or the Trans-Siberian Telegraph Line from Europe to East Asia operated by the Great Northern Telegraph Company of Copenhagen.

Russia is in many ways between Europe and East Asia historically and today. Since the demise of the USSR, Russia first looked West to Western institutions for integration into Western-led governance, which did not work out for either side, with the breakdown with the Russian annexation of Crimea and covert interference in Ukraine from 2014. Russia has in parallel and increasingly sought to develop a Eurasian geo-economic framework, the Eurasian Economic Union. Western sanctions against Russia following the 2014 Ukraine crisis de facto forced Russia to turn towards China as energy customer and funder.

China is pursuing its Belt and Road Initiative building infrastructure across Eurasia, along the old sea lanes of the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean to the Middle East, East Africa and Europe. Russian and Chinese Eurasian geo-economic practices are aligned, where the Arctic is a clear example.

“Russian and Chinese Eurasian geo-economic practices are aligned.”

The Northern Sea Route along the North coast of Russia is part of what is internationally known as the Northeast Passage. The geo-economic thinking around the Northern Sea Route has in principle not changed since the Dutch seafarer Willem



Barents was searching for it and discovered Svalbard and Novaya Zemlya, where he died in 1597. The Northern Sea Route is a major short cut in distance between the two economic power houses of the world, the North Atlantic with Western Europe and the East Coast of the USA and East Asia. For the USSR and Russia, the Northern Sea Route was and is important infrastructure to ensure transportation along the North coast of Russia and far into Eurasia via the major rivers that flow into the Arctic Ocean as Ob, Lena and Yenisei.

International politics, globalization with the rise of East Asian economies and climate change is affecting this geo-economic reality. As mentioned, Russia is increasingly turning to China and East Asian rising economies for selling and financing large-scale energy projects in the Russian Arctic such as Yamal and Arctic LNG2 as well as large-scale infrastructure as the Power of Siberia pipeline system. Climate change with reduced sea ice is greatly facilitating using the Northern Sea Route for longer and longer periods of the year.

### **The Russian Arctic and the Indigenous Arctic**

Russia is enormous and with great ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. This is also the case in the Russian Arctic with indigenous and minority groups from Sami on the Kola Peninsula to Inuit in Chukotka. The Russian Arctic indigenous peoples are represented in the Arctic Council through the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON). Russian Indigenous peoples' politics and status reflect the Russian polity, which is different from the seven other Arctic Council states as liberal democracies and rule of law.

### **The Kingdom of Denmark in the Nordic, North American and Indigenous Arctic**

The Kingdom of Denmark is on many dimensions a very different state than the Russian Federation. The Kingdom of Denmark is a textbook small Nordic state, a liberal democracy and a social-democratic mixed economy. It consists of three constituent parts: Denmark, which is a geographically small, Continental European state at the entrance of the Baltic Sea composing about 98% of the population and economic activity of the Kingdom of Denmark; the Faroes Islands is an archipelago in the North Atlantic between Iceland, Scotland and Western Norway, the population is Scandinavian and totals about 50,000+ with home-rule within the Kingdom of Denmark; Greenland is the world's biggest island at 2 million km<sup>2</sup>, but with a population of about 56,000 of which close to 90% are Greenlandic-Inuit. Greenland has self-rule within the Kingdom of Denmark.

As such, the Kingdom of Denmark spans three Arctics. It is the Nordic Arctic politically, economically, socially, culturally as the Faroe Islands and Greenland constitutionally are parts of the Kingdom of Denmark and its social-democratic welfare-state mixed economy. Geographically and strategically, Greenland is clearly a part of North America. The Greenlandic-Inuit majority in Greenland are part of the Indigenous Arctic. For various audiences in the Kingdom of Denmark, Greenland disproportionately represents the Arctic.

“The Kingdom of Denmark is today an Arctic state due to historical circumstances beyond its own control.”

The Kingdom of Denmark is today an Arctic state due to historical circumstances beyond its own control. The North Atlantic communities of the Kingdom of Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland (and historically Iceland) became associated with Denmark as parts of the medieval Norwegian Kingdom, which entered into union with Denmark in 1380. Norwegian Vikings had settled in the Faroe Islands and Iceland – among other North Atlantic places – in the 800-900s and moved on to Greenland. These independent Viking commonwealths came under Norwegian rule between around 1000 (Faroe Islands and Greenland) to 1262 (Iceland). When Denmark was forced to secede Norway to Sweden at the 1814 Kiel Peace, Denmark surprisingly kept these old Norwegian North Atlantic possessions which make the Kingdom of Denmark an Arctic state.

Since the 1830s, Denmark’s political-constitutional relations with the North Atlantic have been marked by independence politics and ever-increasing self-government of the North Atlantic communities (and independence for Iceland). This process has been driven by national-liberalism, where increasingly conscious national identities demand sovereignty. First, Icelandic intellectuals in Copenhagen in the 1830s-1840s became part of this European intellectual current leading to Icelandic separate constitution in 1874, home-rule in 1904, sovereignty in a personal union of shared monarch in 1918 and declaring the Republic of Iceland in 1944. Faroese students in Copenhagen followed later in the 1800s, so the Faroe Islands got home-rule in 1948 and expanded foreign policy competences in 2005. Greenland was a Danish colony until 1953, when it became an overseas county. Greenlandic students in Denmark in the 1970s were also inspired by nation-alliberalism and Indigenous peoples’ rights prompting home-rule in 1979, followed by self-government in 2009 recognizing Greenlanders as a people under international law with the right of self-determination.

The Greenlandic people and political parties are determined to pursue full independence when Greenland becomes not-dependent on Danish fiscal support and human capital. In the Faroe Islands, independence is a less public issue because the Faroe Islands are much more independent from Denmark in terms of fiscal support and human capital, so the Faroese society de facto functions much more independently from Denmark than the Greenlandic society does.

Greenlandic determination to achieve independence is widely dismissed and ridiculed in Danish society with calls for Greenlanders to accept a reality of never being able to achieve independence. This rejection is usually couched in terms such as Greenland will never fiscally be self-sustaining; the Greenlandic people in absolute terms is too small to satisfy its human capital needs; and Greenland will inevitably fall under the sway of another larger protector as the USA or China, and Denmark is more benevolent to Greenland.

These Danish views of Greenlandic independence are counter-productive and poorly founded. Historically, these Danish views closely mirror Danish views of

Icelandic independence desires before 1918, where Icelandic independence was ridiculed as ridiculous as independence for Amager. Sub-sequent developments show the poor judgment behind these Danish sentiments. Such offensive dismissal of independence desires is also likely to be politically highly counterproductive as they only alienate Greenland (and the Faroe Islands) from Denmark and strengthen the desire for independence. Whether Greenland can become fiscally self-sustaining is a practical economic development policy question, where there are more positive assessments outside the Kingdom of Denmark.

It is easy to reject the argument that the Greenlandic population in absolute terms is too small to satisfy Greenland's human capital needs by comparison with the slightly smaller Faroese population which is largely self-sufficient in terms of human capital. The Faroe Islands (and Iceland before them) clearly show that it is the relative level of education that matters and not the absolute size of the population. The strong Faroese (and Icelandic) human capital is based on quality domestic childcare and educational systems in the local language and culture combined with efficient brain circulation of travelling for education and professional experience and returning home. The key to Greenlandic human capital formation is quality childcare and education in Greenlandic language and culture combined with brain circulation. These conditions are – however – very challenging and will take decades to achieve.

The argument that Greenland cannot defend or represent itself internationally is misleading. Since the loss of the Danish-Norwegian navy in 1801 and 1807 to the Royal Navy, Denmark has not been able to ensure contact with the North Atlantic and has been dependent on the benevolence of first Britain and now the USA. So, it is wrong to claim that Denmark defends Greenland today, which is not rejecting the value of the coast guard work of the Royal Danish Navy in the North Atlantic.

The dynamics of national-liberalism have not slowed since the French Revolution that sparked them. Danish, Faroese and Greenlandic – as Icelandic before – identities are drifting further and further apart. There is very little, if any, common Kingdom of Denmark (Rigsfællesskabet) national identity. Denmark as a state is a strictly ethnic-linguistic state and has never wanted to form a multi-lingual or multi-national national identity or state form. This unwillingness and inability to form a multilingual or multinational state including large German-speaking populations exactly provoked the 1848-1850 and 1864 Schleswig wars causing the loss of the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein (and Lauenburg).

The constituent parts of the Kingdom of Denmark are therefore likely to continue to drift further and further apart with an unseizing demand for ever greater and eventually full independence in the Faroe Islands and Greenland. The scenarios for the Kingdom of Denmark are therefore the following. Greenland does not achieve fiscal and human capital self-sufficiency to reach full independence. This situation will lead to ever-increasing political friction between Denmark and Greenland, which will be vulnerable to external shocks as provoked by the Trump idea of buying Greenland.

Alternatively, Greenland manages to develop economically toward fiscal self-sufficiency, and Greenlandic social, health and educational situation improves to allow a significant strengthening of Greenlandic human capital. Then Greenland in a strategic dialogue and process with Denmark, but also other Nordic countries, the European Union, the USA, Canada and global partners in Asia can progress stepwise to full independence. The historical lesson from the Danish-Icelandic relationship is that independence was beneficial to Icelandic society as it allowed the political system to focus on socio-economic issues rather than be distracted by the question of the relationship with Denmark. Also, it was clear that independence solved the political disagreement between Denmark and Iceland, which are today close Nordic, European, NATO and UN allies and partners.

### **The Arctic seen from Denmark**

Danish Arctic research is overwhelmingly focused on Greenland, and from experience, Denmark is less represented in the International Arctic Science Committee and its annual Arctic Science Summit Week than Finland, Norway and Sweden. The Royal Danish Navy has unparalleled operational experience around the Faroe Islands and Greenland, but Danish security policy discourse about the Arctic is usually focused on Greenland with little regard for a Circumpolar perspective. Even concerning the Thule Radar in Northwest Greenland, which is a corner stone of Danish-American national security relations, there is little regard for its broader context of strategic missile defense infrastructure from Alaska to Vardø in Northern Norway.

“Denmark is often not very knowledgeable or aware of this marine socio-ecological nature of Faroese society.”

### **The Arctic seen from the Faroe Islands**

The Faroe Islands are a Sub-Arctic community and with many socio-environmental and cultural similarities with Iceland and Coastal Norway. The marine environment has a strong socio-ecological effect shaping marine resource-based economy and society in the Faroe Islands – as Iceland and Coastal Norway. Denmark – with a completely different socio-ecological context – is often not very knowledgeable or aware of this marine socio-ecological nature of Faroese society – and the strong formal and informal ties to Iceland and Coastal Norway. The Faroe Islands have in recent years pursued the possibilities for a more Arctic identity and identification by others. These opportunities include access and representation in the Arctic Council with Denmark and Greenland. The Faroe Islands have published a (sub-) Arctic strategy. In light of the strong maritime competences in the Faroe Islands, the Faroes emphasize maritime opportunities from, for instance, new sea lanes that may pass the Faroe Islands.

The Faroe Islands have always remained outside the European Economic Community/European Union as the Common Fisheries Policy is unacceptable to the Faroe Islands (as to Greenland, Iceland and Coastal Norway). Historically, the

Faroe Islands had a significant long-distance fishing fleet operating in the Barents Sea, around Iceland and Greenland, and on the Grand Banks of Canada. The United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea and its provisions of 200 NM Economic Exclusion Zones (EEZ) excluded the Faroese long-distance fleet from many historic fishing grounds, making the Faroe Islands much more dependent on its own (much more limited) EEZ and quota agreements in the North Atlantic and Barents Sea with Iceland, Norway, Russia and the European Union.

Bio-economies can be highly dynamic, and, for instance, climate change is affecting the distribution of fish stocks moving across EEZ boundaries. This bio-economic dynamic caused severe conflict between Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Norway, Russia and the EU, where Iceland and the Faroe Islands did not accept the existing distribution of quotas in light of greater biomass in their EEZs. This conflict deteriorated to the extent that the EU closed its ports (including Danish ports) for disputed catches, and that the Faroe Islands took the EU to the WTO court system. This conflict is part of the background for the current Faroese-European-Russian relations in fish trade. When the European Union imposed sanctions on Russia in response to the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia imposed counter-sanctions on European food exports to Russia, including, for instance, Norwegian aquaculture salmon. Russia exempted Faroese fish exports to Russia, which was a very lucrative opportunity for the Faroe Islands. Expansion in aquaculture and the export to Russia has contributed significantly to economic growth in the Faroe Islands, which allows many Faroese to move back to the Faroe Islands. An important contextual information here is that many Faroese moved away from the Faroe Islands after the bank crisis in the early 1990s (which by many Faroese rightly or wrongly is blamed on the Danish government sacrificing the Faroese society for Danske Bank interests). The Faroe Islands have experienced net-emigration, especially of young educated women for years, so young Faroese families returning to the Faroe Islands is very important for the Faroese society.

### **The Arctic seen from Greenland**

Greenland is perhaps more than any other part of the Arctic at the intersection of more than one Arctic. Greenland is constitutionally and socio-economically part of the Nordic Arctic as part of the Kingdom of Denmark and a Nordic social-democratic welfare state. Ethnically and culturally, Greenland is part of the Indigenous Arctic, as close to 90% of the population of Greenland is Inuit. Greenland is therefore also a rare case of a majority indigenous self-governing society. The Inuit identity of Greenland relative to a Nordic identity is illustrated by Erfalasorput, the Greenlandic flag, which is not a cross-flag as the other Nordic flags.

Greenlanders have also historically been key actors in Arctic indigenous peoples' organization since the late 1970s in Copenhagen and are central participants in the Inuit Circumpolar Council, that represent Inuit from Greenland via Canada and Alaska to Chukotka in Northeast Russia.

“Geographically, Greenland is part of North America.”

Geographically, Greenland is part of North America. Greenland is socio-infrastructurally closer to North America than the Nordic Arctic in Northern FennoScandia, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, which all have highly developed and integrated national infrastructure. In contrast, Greenland has the enormous expanse like Arctic Canada and Alaska with isolated communities. All 70+ settlements in Greenland from Nuuk with close to 20,000 inhabitants to small settlements of less than 100 inhabitants are isolated from each other in terms of infrastructure. Each community has its own power, water, waste infrastructure and there are no road connections between any two settlements, which also characterizes many communities in Arctic Canada and Alaska – and some in Russian Arctic. This socio-technical phenomenon is called “island operations” (ødrift) and is technically and socially very demanding and imposes great cost and challenges on Greenlandic society.

Greenland is also strategically a part of North America. It is central to North American national security geo-strategically as it commands air and sea lanes connecting North America with Western Europe as was very clear in World War Two and led to widespread US military presence in Greenland during WWII and the Cold War. Far Northern Greenland (Thule Air Base) is geo-strategically important for US national security. It is close to the USSR across the North Pole. During the early Cold War, Thule Air Base and surrounding areas were important nuclear launch pads for the USA. Later, the Thule Air Base was primarily important for the radar and distant early warning. Today, the Thule radar is important for US national missile defense.

### **Norwegian–Russian Arctic People–to–People Learning**

The Kingdom of Denmark and Russia are both Arctic, but otherwise very different, states. The West Nordic region and the Barents Region together with the Russian Arctic have very limited mutual familiarity, knowledge, experience and networks, especially in comparison with Norwegian–Russian Arctic relations.

Norway and the Kingdom of Denmark are in many ways very similar countries and societies. They have about the same population size and are both social-democratic welfare states and mixed economies. Norway has in recent decades become relatively more affluent due to oil and gas rents. Linguistically, culturally and religiously, the Kingdom of Denmark and Norway are closer to each other than to any other country. The political systems and cultures are also very similar. Both the Kingdom of Denmark and Norway are founding members of NATO. Denmark (not the Faroe Islands and Greenland) is EU member, while Norway is EEA member. A significant difference here is that Norway shares land and maritime border with Russia unlike Denmark.

“The Norwegian–Russian border is one of the historically most stable and peaceful borders in Europe and of Russia.”

The Norwegian–Russian border is one of the historically most stable and peaceful borders in Europe and of Russia. There has been no Norwegian–Russian violent

conflict since the middle ages. The land border set in 1826 is one of Europe's oldest existing borders. The border was open until 1917 with much so-called Pomor trade between Northern Norway and the White Sea. The border opened again at the end of the Cold War. Norway and Russia agreed on their maritime border in the Barents Sea in 2010 after decades of disagreement between Soviet and Western interpretation of the law of the sea.

There are differences in perceptions of Russia (and the USSR) between Northern Norway and Southern Norway, where North Norwegian perceptions are much more positive towards Russians and Russian society. These North Norwegian positive views have WWII and recent roots. North Norway has a very different WWII occupation history than Southern Norway. The Finnmark resistance were partisans trained, equipped and controlled from Murmansk, collecting intelligence on shipping and for the heavy fighting on the Kola Peninsula under extreme Arctic conditions. In contrast, the West and South Norwegian resistance was controlled from London. After the liberation, the South/West Norwegian resistance was highly celebrated, whereas the Finnmark partisans were harassed by the security services of the social-democratic NATO state.

Norway has through the Cold War and now pursued a two-legged policy towards USSR/Russia of deterrence through NATO-membership (although with reassuring self-imposed limitations on NATO exercises near the Norwegian/Soviet border, no permanent foreign bases or nuclear weapons in peace time) and very extensive bilateral Norwegian-US signal and electronic intelligence collection collaboration in Northern Norway and the Barents Sea. The other leg is engagement with the USSR through especially joint fisheries management of the Barents Sea since 1974 and lower level community engagement through sports.

Since the end of the Cold War, Norway invests substantial resources in people-to-people relations with Russia in the Barents cooperation in areas as education, research, environment, health, business, culture, sports. This engagement is designed to build people-to-people relationships and familiarity from kinder-garden level to PhD-students and further. These engagements are staggered where investments in kinder-garden children paper-drawing competitions is very long-term socialization. The investments in student exchange and joint PhD education have medium-term time horizons and, for instance, regional politicians' interaction has immediate effects. I will briefly outline three examples of Norwegian-Russian-third party graduate student training, that I have personal experience with. It must be noted that these activities are fully funded from Norwegian side and bringing Russian and international graduate students to Tromsø and Northern Norway and housing and feeding them is naturally expensive.

### **Arctic Frontiers PhD workshop (previously known as Young Scientist Forum)**

Every late January since 2007, Tromsø has hosted the Arctic Frontiers conference, which was the large continuously running Arctic political, scientific and business conference until Arctic Circle Assembly conferences started in Reykja-

vik every October since 2013. Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle are the two large annual Arctic conferences. Arctic Frontiers stands out in the West for its very high-level Russian political, scientific and commercial participation.

Arctic Frontiers together with UiT The Arctic University of Norway runs an interdisciplinary PhD course with about 25 international PhD candidates or postdocs, where  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{3}$  are Russian with Norwegian Barents cooperation funding. The PhD candidates and few postdocs attend the Arctic Frontiers conference Sunday afternoon until Thursday evening late and then board the Hurtigruten coastal steamer for Svolvær in Lofoten arriving Friday evening. Here, they have intensive group work together with lectures and field visits before reboarding Hurtigruten Tuesday evening returning to Tromsø Wednesday afternoon. I attended this workshop as a postdoc in 2011 and have taught in the workshop 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2017. Arctic Frontiers PhD workshop is an excellent example of a PhD course bringing together Norwegian and Russian – and third-party PhD candidates in Arctic related studies (all disciplines) and solving intense group work challenges while discovering Northern Norway. For me personally, Arctic Frontiers in 2011 and the connected PhD workshop was my shock and awe introduction to the Barents region and Russia in the Arctic.

### **Arctic Frontiers Arctic Student Forum Master's course**

The Arctic Frontiers conference runs an intensive international Master's course (Arctic Student Forum) in parallel to the PhD workshop, where the Arctic Student Forum is from Wednesday evening before the Arctic Frontiers conference starting Sunday evening and until Wednesday night. I was the academic coordinator of Arctic Student Forum in 2017 and 2018. Each year, Arctic Student Forum included about 35 advanced bachelor and Master's students, of which about  $\frac{1}{3}$  are Russian. The students are pre-assigned to groups maximizing national, gender and disciplinary diversity and solve a problem during the forum. All participants have fully covered travel to and accommodation in Tromsø.

The Arctic Frontiers conference collaborates closely with the Russian Geographical Society on Arctic Student Forum. The Russian Geographical Society runs a Russia-wide student competition for participation with hundreds of Russian master's students competing for a dozen places to go to Arctic Student Forum in Tromsø. Senior representatives of the Russian Geographical Society attend Arctic Frontiers conference in Tromsø and meet the Arctic Student Forum participants. The Russian Geographical Society is one of the imperial Russian scientific societies, which play an active and interesting role for Russian's science and public diplomacy as well as soft power policy. The Russian Geographical Society is active in Arctic affairs, and, for instance, the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society is active in Middle East affairs. President Vladimir Putin and Minister of Defense Sergey Shoygu are involved in the top-leadership of the Russian Geographical Society showing its political and strategic importance.

“Vladimir Putin and Sergey Shoygu are involved in the top-leadership of the Russian Geographical Society.”



The Arctic Frontiers Arctic Student Forum for advanced bachelor's and master's students can often be the first time Western and Russian students of Arctic questions meet and work together intensively on joint projects. It is my personal observation, that it this encounter is a strong learning experience for both sides, perhaps especially Western students, who know less about Russia than Russian students know about the West. One year, a Danish student attended and at the end told me excitedly, that it was this student's first encounter with Russian students, "who were really nice and just like us [Western students]," which is of course the intended effect.

### **Norwegian–Russian PhD course SATA–Society and Advanced Technology in the Arctic**

I hold a 2M NOK grant from DIKU (former SIU) to run a joint Norwegian PhD/Master's course on Society and Advanced Technology in the Arctic (SATA) with the Higher School of Economics (Moscow) and the Trapeznikov Institute of Control Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The course brings 10 Norwegian and 10 Russian PhD and Master's candidates together with 5 UiT and 5 HSE/RAS professors for one week in 2018 (Tromsø), 2019 (Svalbard) and 2020 (Moscow). The graduate students solve complex group assignments in mixed groups, which is an intensive way of training Arctic collaboration between Norway and Russia and across disciplines.

### **Recommendations for Arctic Learning between the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia**

I have pointed out above, that the West Nordic societies (Kingdom of Denmark and Iceland) and Russia have far less connections and familiarity than the Barents Region and Russia. In light of the Arctic, Baltic and global significance of Russia for the Kingdom of Denmark, it is of great importance that there is greater familiarity with and knowledge of Russia as an Arctic state and actor (focus on the Arctic here). Russia will also benefit from greater familiarity with and knowledge about the Kingdom of Denmark (and Iceland) as Arctic actors. Here I will make some observations and recommendations about how the Kingdom of Denmark and Russia can build greater mutual Arctic familiarity and knowledge. I will include Iceland, although it is outside the mandate of this project, but because of the regional coherence of the West Nordic region.

Before continuing, it is necessary to keep in mind the substantial Norwegian investments in the people-to-people collaboration with Russia, which is dwarfed by Norwegian defense and intelligence spending in the Arctic. Norway with its oil and gas rents have fiscal possibilities today, that the Kingdom of Denmark does not have and which requires hard priorities between expenditure and tax revenue. The Kingdom of Denmark has clearly not been willing in recent years to prioritize such Arctic science and people-to-people work. In a recent Danish state budget, 3-5M DKK was allocated to create an Arctic science hub in Greenland. These 3-5M DKK can be compared to the 2M NOK grant just for my Norwegian-Russian PhD course, one out of many such projects.

“In Danish public debate today, there seems to be strong voices and political willingness to significantly increase Danish defense spending in the North Atlantic.”

For the Kingdom of Denmark – and Iceland – to pursue the kind of Arctic people-to-people collaboration pursued by Norway will require unprecedented budgetary will. However, in Danish public debate today, there seems to be strong voices and political willingness to significantly increase Danish defense spending in the North Atlantic of a magnitude much greater than what is required for people-to-people collaboration. The effectiveness of increased defense spending by the small state of the Kingdom of Denmark in the North Atlantic in a US-Russian (-somewhat Chinese) standoff at the strategic level is questionable unless very well designed. In light of the strong voices in Danish debate calling for significantly increased Danish defense spending in the North Atlantic, it is important with critical and informed debate and decision-making.

In contrast, some of these funds could be diverted to a much greater Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic multilateral Arctic engagement – also with Russia. This engagement could strongly increase Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic-Russian mutual familiarity and knowledge and anchor the Kingdom of Denmark more firmly in Circumpolar Arctic affairs.

It is important that Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic Arctic people-to-people engagement of Russia is not bilateral, but anchored in multilateral or regional Arctic institutions and processes. For the Kingdom of Denmark to pursue bilateral Arctic people-to-people engagement of Russia would likely be relatively inefficient and ineffective because of lack of Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic experience and networks in Russia and possible relatively limited Russian interest. This is equally the case for Iceland.

Therefore, the Kingdom of Denmark (and Iceland) should pursue Arctic people-to-people engagement through regional and multilateral Arctic institutions and processes, which lend themselves to such engagement in cost-efficient ways. However, Danish actors, who are used to operating unilaterally or bilaterally in Greenland must accept settings with many other and some very experienced and well-connected actors. The regional and multilateral settings for Kingdom of Denmark (and Iceland) Arctic people-to-people engagement with Russia are:

### **The Barents Euro-Arctic Region**

The Kingdom of Denmark and Iceland are members of the Barents Euro Arctic Council, although passive. The Kingdom of Denmark and Iceland should pursue participating – and funding this participation – in the people-to-people activities of the Barents regional cooperation. Such participation would serve the primary purpose of rapidly and strongly increasing Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic and Icelandic familiarity with Russian Arctic actors in academia, business, culture, etc. A second, but also valuable, effect will be to integrate the two Nordic Arctic regions, the Barents Region and the West Nordic region, into one Nordic Arctic region, which has intra-Nordic benefits.

The Kingdom of Denmark and Iceland could in Barents regional setting actively pursue co-funding access to, for example, the extensive Norwegian-Russian graduate student training activities. Such West-Nordic participation could quickly build human capital among West-Nordic (including Danish) graduate students on Russia as an Arctic actor and build mutual West Nordic-Russian familiarity and knowledge.

### **Arctic Council Working Groups**

All parts of the Kingdom of Denmark – and Iceland – as member-states have access to the Arctic Council and its Working Groups, where Russia is a major member-state. Active participation from West Nordic participants in Arctic Council Working Groups gives opportunity to work closely with Russian counterparts.

### **International Arctic Science Committee and International Arctic Social Sciences Association**

IASC and IASSA were both founded in the last years of the Cold War, when it became possible for Western and Soviet Arctic scientists to work together. IASC is the international body for Arctic natural sciences (and a little social sciences and humanities). The annual Arctic Science Summit Week of IASC is the main annual Arctic science business and research meeting. It is my experience from participating several years, that Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic Arctic science researchers and authorities are less active and present than Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish, which reflects the Greenlandic and less Circumpolar focus of Danish Arctic research. Russia is very well represented and active in both IASC and IASSA. IASC and IASSA are therefore also avenues for closer Danish/Faroese/Greenlandic – and Icelandic – Arctic research and education engagement of Russia.

### **University of the Arctic**

The University of the Arctic is a network of more than 150 higher education institutions in the Arctic or interested in the Arctic. There are 8 members in Denmark, one member in the Faroe Islands, and three member-institutions in Greenland. Iceland has 8 member-institutions. There are 54 Russian member institutions. University of the Arctic also gives ample opportunities for West Nordic institutions to engage Russian institutions.

“Parts of Danish business have decades of experience operating in the North Atlantic.”

### **Arctic Economic Council**

Parts of Danish business has decades of experience operating in the North Atlantic. Sections of Danish business also have experience operating in Russia. Danish business has a strong historical legacy of operating in Russia, most prominently the Great Nordic Telegraph Company establishing and operating the telegraph link between European Russia and the Russian Far East and East Asia.

However, it is my impression, that Danish business is not active in the Russian Arctic and the large energy and infrastructure happening there these years. Maersk has transited the Northeast Passage/Northern Sea Route with the first container vessel (Venta Maersk), many bulk carriers have transited. The Faroe Islands have different Arctic economic ties with Russia, both through fishing quota agreements in the Barents Sea and Northeast Atlantic, fish export to Russia and Russian vessels visiting Faroese ports.

“Iceland has long-standing economic ties with USSR and Russia.”

I visited Runavík in June 2018, and I was struck by a large Russian trawler and cargo vessel in the port. Greenland does not to my knowledge have any particular Arctic economic ties with Russia apart from exchanging fishing quotas. Iceland has long-standing economic ties with USSR and Russia. During the Cold War, Iceland engaged in barter trade with the East Block to save currency and because of the Cod Wars with the UK, so Iceland received Soviet oil among other products. Arctic business engagement is another venue for West-Nordic Arctic engagement with Russia. Today, economic interests in the Arctic are organized in the Arctic Economic Council, which is an avenue for West Nordic (and Danish) business interests to engage Russian Arctic business interests.

# Russia and Regional and Non–Regional Actors in The Arctic

Natalia  
Viakhireva

*The Arctic remains a region of low tension in Russia–West relations in comparison with many others. However, The Arctic is currently undergoing a significant transformation which are the result of climate change and global political processes. As a result, the region faces new challenges, though new opportunities also arise. One of the trends which has taken shape in recent years is the rising attention of non–Arctic states to the region and growing activity of non–regional actors in the Arctic. Almost all the non–Arctic states have, over the past five years, either updated their Arctic strategies or adopted strategic documents on the issue for the first time. For example, in 2018, China adopted a White Paper on its policy in the Arctic for the first time in history. Given the changes in the region, the article focuses on Russia’s current vision of the Arctic region and relations with regional and non–regional actors.*

## **Russia’s approach to relations with Arctic regional and non–regional actors**

Russia’s attitude towards the Arctic as a whole is mainly determined by geography. A significant part of Russia is located beyond the Arctic Circle. The Arctic is an important resource base for Russia, and the region forms a significant part of the country’s export potential. There is a strong believe that Arctic development is possible only by launching and developing international cooperation, through attracting foreign investment and exchange of experience.

Russia is keen to strengthen the positions of the Arctic states and is wary of expanding the circle of other actors in the region. It can be argued that the Arctic is a zone of Russia’s strategic interests, and this goes some way to explaining Moscow’s attitude to the presence of non-regional actors in the Arctic and stable relations with the Arctic states.

Russia prioritizes building relations with regional Arctic states, recognizing that many of the region’s issues affect non-Arctic states too. Cooperation with non-regional actors opens up new opportunities for harnessing the region’s inherent potential. Russia is interested in developing business contacts with other countries and companies that have relevant technologies and financial resources.

Almost all significant projects have been implemented in cooperation with foreign corporations, including mineral exploration and development on shore and shelf, construction of ports and of icebreakers. At the same time, the anti-Russian sanctions impose certain restrictions on the country’s cooperation with its Western partners. Sanctions imposed on Russia include embargoes on the supply of equipment and technology, as well as bans on companies providing services for projects to develop offshore oil resources in the Arctic implemented by Rosneft

and Gazprom. In addition, restrictions were placed on the ability of Russian oil companies and banks to attract financing from abroad. The sanctions have led to a number of foreign oil companies suspending their participation in Arctic shelf projects. The Russian oil and gas sector is highly dependent on equipment and services from states that imposed these sanctions. In this regard, there is a growing interest in interaction with countries from the East Asia, although there are certain risks here. One of them is a risk of accidents as the quality of their equipment tend to be poorer.

On the whole, Moscow's approach is based on building balanced and mutually beneficial relations with Arctic and non-Arctic states alike. Regardless of sanctions and overall crisis in Russia-West relations, there are a number of areas where Arctic states have more common interests than disagreements, and where cooperation has prospects, and some positive results since 2014 have been visible:

### **Scientific cooperation**

Science has been a platform for cooperation in the Arctic for many years, during the Cold war and in the period after that. 2014 crisis luckily had little influence on this sphere. Moreover, the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation was signed in 2017 and entered in force in 2018. It gives one of the examples of scientific diplomacy in the period of crisis in Russia-West relations, especially Russia-U.S. relations. The agreement provides a legal framework for regulating the conduct of research, which is important in an unstable crisis situation and widen an opportunity to better understanding of the region.

One of the aspects requiring closer attention within and beyond the agreement, is building cooperation among universities of the Arctic countries, developing student and academic exchange programs, as it gives not only a potential for future development of the region, but also helps to create overall positive relations among countries. The University of Arctic, the network of more than 150 higher education institutions, could serve as a basis for such cooperation.

“Actors in the Arctic need to strictly observe the requirements of the International Polar Code, which came into force in 2017.”

### **Environment and pollution**

Environment protection and pollution control is an area of high support of all governments, regardless their political views, and an issue of high concern for the population. Collaboration on these issues are quite depoliticized and could serve as a good example of multilateral cooperation in the period of crisis in Russia-West relations.

### **Maritime safety and prevention of marine pollution from ships**

There is a trend towards the intensification of shipping in different areas of Polar waters. This issue requires multilateral discussion and approach. Actors in Arctic

need strictly observe the requirements of the International Polar Code, which came into force in 2017. Russia is prepared to develop cooperation with non-regional actors in three areas:

### **Investments**

Primarily energy projects. Russia continues to develop cooperation with European countries and has no plans to curtail this cooperation any time soon. However, the sanctions are making it increasingly difficult to implement joint business projects with these countries, which is why there is a growing interest in Moscow in attracting investments from East Asian countries, even though the size of such investments is small.

### **The Northern Sea Route**

Scientific and technological cooperation, including development of Northern Sea Route and safety navigation through it.

The Northern Sea Route. Russia discuss with East-Asian countries prospects for navigation through the Northern Sea Route. As Arctic Forum of April 9 2019 demonstrated, a number of East-Asian companies are interested in such cooperation. Development of the Northern Sea Route is a large-scale long-term project requiring significant investments. Experts underline that Russia won't be able to implement this project on its own, and is open to dialogue with foreign partners including China.

# Climate Change in the Arctic with Respect to Russia: On Geoengineering

Mette  
Skak

*Russia will be hit harder by global warming than most of the planet, and the melting permafrost poses a huge threat to people and infrastructure. Despite political hesitance to act on the climate agenda, there is now a change in the discourse. The vital climate nexus between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russian Federation should be seen as a potential platform for climate dialogue and perhaps for joint action.*

On September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019, at the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York, the Russian presidential climate envoy, Ruslan Edelgeriev, announced that his native country is at long last ratifying the Paris Climate Agreement (hence PCA).

Russia is the world's number four CO<sub>2</sub> emitter and is notorious for pursuing an odd climate crisis policy – one of denial and free-riding as will be shown below. Joining the PCA will be no game changer stresses one of Russia's most respected climate experts, Dr Alexey Kokorin. Nevertheless, beneath the surface change for the better is discernible. According to Kokorin, the above-mentioned Edelgeriev who became Vladimir Putin's climate advisor in mid-2018 has proven willing to listen to the increasingly stern warnings about the dangers facing Russia as a result of the planetary climate crisis, e.g. the IPCC's Special Report on the Ocean and the Cryosphere in a Changing Climate.

What more is, he and other politicians from the younger generation have persuaded President Vladimir Putin to take the climate agenda more seriously. This reflects the fact that climate inaction jeopardizes the oil- and gas infrastructure located in Russia's Arctic along with other devastating effects. In the summer of 2018, Siberia was hit by an inferno of tundra and forests on fire destroying permafrost and releasing soot or black carbon which – when landing on the nearby Arctic sea ice – will *speed up* the rapid melting of ice.

In other words, there is climate crisis interdependence between the entire Arctic and the Russian Federation and thus a vital climate nexus between Denmark aka the Unity of the Realm - Denmark proper, the Faroe Isles and Greenland – and Russia. In itself this is not bad news. Rather, it should be looked upon as a potential platform for climate dialogue between the two parties about best practices for climate crisis mitigation, maybe even joint action. This is one key finding serving as point of departure.

Accordingly, this contribution to the report on *Arctic and Baltic interfaces between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russia Federation* focuses on the Arctic by making a stock-taking of climate change in Russia and Russian climate crisis mitigation policy as topics suffering from neglect in both Denmark and Russia. Another finding which will be explored and discussed below is that in terms of solutions to the escalating climate crisis, there are no quick fixes. Only a deter-



mined, long-term political effort of climate change mitigation will do as Russia's contribution to safeguarding life on the planet for future generations. This view is shared by Western and Russian analysts alike. In order to illuminate their argument, the analysis contains an excursus into the security intricacies of so-called geoengineering as the implicit, but elusive quick fix envisioned by not just climate change sceptics but also the opposing camp of dystopians. What is offered here as policy advice for Denmark and Russia represents the golden mean of guarded optimism and climate action based on piecemeal social engineering in the vein of the philosopher Karl Popper.

As for the climate crisis security architecture in the Arctic and its fora for climate crisis governance, the region displays fairly pragmatic cooperation among all the parties including the United States and Russia amidst renewed Cold War-like tension. To quote the finding of a two-volume in-depth analysis of Arctic governance, the team of scholars discovered "a rather orderly 'Arctic Race'".

The interstate forum for Arctic governance is the Arctic Council uniting Russia with the four NATO members Canada, Denmark, Norway and the United States along with other members and observers. The Arctic Council cannot take on hard military security issues, only softer ones pertaining to the environment, indigenous nations and the climate. In these respects, however, the Arctic Council serves as a powerful think tank inspiring government policy and action.

Its specialized scientific expertise turns it into a climate intelligence service of sorts. Day-to-day cooperation among Arctic governments on fishery and other low politics issues has not been paralyzed by the alarm over Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Despite some concern over Russia's claim to dominate the Northern Sea Route, private actors such as the Danish shipping giant Maersk quietly relied on the chaperoning by a Russian icebreaker during its "one-off trial" sailing in August 2018 along Russia's north coast. Similarly, Russian President Putin's possibly overblown vision of quadrupling the amount of cargo transported on the North Sea Route by 2025 compared to the 20 million tons in 2017 nudges Russia towards pragmatic, not confrontational geo-economics.

On the other hand, and from the perspective of great power geopolitics, the hard military security architecture of the Arctic consists of one militarizing nuclear superpower, Russia; a rising China that declared itself a 'near-Arctic state' in January 2018 and, lastly, the other nuclear superpower, the United States whose Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asserted the equally keen U.S. strategic interest in Arctic affairs in May 2019. Yet, Russia is highly dependent on cooperation with other powers in the Arctic region whereas elsewhere it can allow itself zero sum-behavior. Equally noteworthy is the fact that climate change as such has not been 'securitised' by the Russian government into another zero sum-game. Arctic Russia represents half of the world's Arctic coastline and is home to two thirds of the world's Arctic population. As for the drama of melting permafrost-driven climate change, the astonishing fact is that some two thirds of Russian Federation territory consist of permafrost. These geographical factors turn Russia into the truly strategic actor in Arctic affairs. Indeed, Russia is a great power having strong and legitimate Arctic interests.

## Russian climate change policy and actual climate change disruption in Russia

The problem with Russia is that its weak economy and continued dependence on export earnings from fossil fuels create perverse incentives for not acting against climate change. This logic is powerfully articulated by the Russian military analyst Alexander Golts:

*"Over the last decade, the Russian leadership has become obsessed with the notion that climate change will result in the imminent melting of the polar ice cap in the Arctic Ocean. At this point, these politicians argue, Russia will be able to tap a wealth of heretofore inaccessible natural resources, such as oil and natural gas from the seabed. In addition, the role of the Northern Sea Route (which hugs Russia's Arctic coast) will increase dramatically, providing huge revenues to Moscow from cargo ships allowed to pass through this transit corridor connecting Europe, Asia and North America."*

So, on the one hand, we are dealing "... with a political climate in Russia that more often denies the impact of climate change and therefore delays adaptation and mitigation measures" and, on the other, a syndrome of "competing Russian stakeholders with different priorities locked in a competition for limited resources". The losers in the latter game are the Russian environmentalists desperately seeking to put climate change and the acute need for climate mitigation on the political agenda.

"The Kremlin pursues an odd mixture of climate crisis silence and obscurantism."

Thus, one in-depth study of the coverage by various Russian newspapers of climate change issues such as the Copenhagen COP15 Conference in 2009 and the domestic Russian heatwave of 2010 concluded that they practice 'media obedience' by not criticizing the weak official Russian climate policy or – what's even worse – by not covering climate change at all. The Russian climate doctrine of 2009 did recognize climate change as man-made. But the problem remains that the Kremlin pursues an odd mixture of climate crisis silence and obscurantism. One such climax was reached this summer, when Putin amidst the inferno of wildfires throughout Siberia – devastating an area the size of Belgium – mocked solar panels and windmills claiming the latter to shake worms out of the ground and hitting birds in large numbers.

At this juncture, a conceptual clarification is warranted. Earlier, I mentioned as good news that climate change has not been 'securitised' by the Russian government - an exception proving the rule of the Kremlin's securitisation of everything including the Arctic. According to the Copenhagen school theory of securitisation, once a given problem on the political agenda has been securitised as representing an acute threat to a valued referent object, it turns into emergency politics resulting in a closing of further debate and the resort to extraordinary, draconian measures. Hereby, securitization becomes the antithesis to Popper's principle of piecemeal social engineering based on enlightenment, evidence and public

debate. In order to fully comprehend the political challenge of climate change, it is necessary to distinguish between such politics of panics and the necessary climate politics of precaution. In order to capture the latter, the Danish political scientist Olaf Corry proposes a new category between the two extremes of securitisation and normal politics, a golden mean which he terms *riskification*. Climate change does not represent an external threat in the sense of a tangible ‘other’ and hence implies not defence, but a plan of action to *govern* the conditions of possibility for harm.

So the way to bring Russian climate change policy on a sound footing is neither by securitising nor de-securitising the issue into normal politics, but by *riskifying it* for the sake of furthering a Kremlin policy of longer-term societal engineering to quote Corry’s apt Popperian phrase. The point is to uphold governance, transparency, precautionary measures and increased cooperation. Corry further cites Al Gore’s warning against draconian measures the target being to bolster social resilience instead. Similarly, Dr Pachauri of the IPCC stresses the need for learning, research and honest debate on what is to be done. Conversely, Corry considers Bjørn Lomborg’s approach to climate change politics as just normal politics misguided as Lomborg misses the need for focused precautionary action – for deliberate long-term re-engineering of global society in order not to create further climate vulnerability.

“Even the fertile Voronezh region is becoming a victim of aridisation.”

As for actual climate change disruption in Russia, the formerly dominant perception – popular with the Kremlin – that Russian agriculture and energy exports benefit from global warming must now be dismissed as wrong. Russian environmental and natural resource economists have calculated annual losses for the country’s grain production sector amounting to \$3.5 billion this year climbing to \$4 billion by 2050. They conclude that even the fertile Voronezh region is becoming a victim of aridisation and cite the high and growing number of extreme weather episodes throughout Russia in recent years. Back in 2000, Russia’s meteorological authority Roshydromet observed 141 “severe weather phenomena” threatening human safety or economic losses; a number that grew to 469 in 2012 and reached 580 in 2018. Roshydromet’s most recent annual report concluded that Russia is warming at up to 2.5 times faster than the global average. In the spirit of riskification, already Safonov and Safonova called for a systematic, long-term approach policy of adapting Russian agriculture to climate change.

Remarkably, in 2018 Russia’s Ministry for Natural Resources and Environment (Minprirody) published a 900-page report warning about nothing short of an environmental Apocalypse brought about by climate change. The Ministry cited epidemics, drought, mass flooding and hunger as likely future scenarios. Its dire forecast is based on e.g. the recent 11-fold rise in the number of deaths from environmental disasters. Minprirody calculated Russia to be the number four emitter of greenhouse gases contributing 4.5 per cent of global emissions just

behind China, the United States and India. Furthermore, Moscow and other Russian cities will be exposed to even more heat and pollution, leading to water supply emergencies. Another imminent danger is railway accidents due to deformed rails brought about by the destabilization of the ground. Melting permafrost in the Russian Arctic could lead to dangerous chemical, biological and radioactive substances entering the human habitat. Russia's Far East bordering Asia will be prone to flash floods and monsoons. Last but not least, Minprirody prophetically warned about forest wildfires in Siberia causing more emissions and threatening lives.

“Melting permafrost in the Russian Arctic could lead to dangerous chemical, biological and radioactive substances entering the human habitat.”

A Russian government insider placed the Ministry's stern warning in the context of competing Russian stakeholders with different priorities locked in a competition for limited resources cited above from Stacy Closson. Four ministries used to share the climate portfolio – the Ministries for Economic Development, Energy, Industry and Trade and Natural Resources and Environment, respectively. In any event, the latter's push for ownership of the climate agenda based on its insight into the climate drama was the first sign of climate political change inside Russia suggesting an embrace of climate change riskification. The aforementioned climate expert Kokorin acknowledges power struggles in and around the Kremlin as driver, but adds the generational factor as an equally powerful push factor furthering Russia's awakening to domestic and global warming. Among others, he stresses the role of the 37-year-old Minister of Economics Maxim Orekshin whose ministry is preparing a law on green taxes and other economic incentives pushing Russian firms in the green direction. Concerning the symbolic act of letting Russia join the PCA this may stimulate much-needed public service media coverage of climate change and hence further public debate of climate issues throughout Russia's regions. Reportedly, young Greta Thunberg's dramatic speech in the United Nations in September 2019 electrified and polarized Russians, and she was invited to speak in the Russian Duma. At long last, Russia may be abandoning its climate crisis ignorance and indifference.

The melting of permafrost is one trend of immense danger for Russia and the entire Arctic. Permafrost binds organic carbon materials into the ground, but if it melts microorganisms will degrade these materials accumulated over millennia which will release greenhouse gases and methane and thus hasten global warming – the process that brought the permafrost to melt in the first place. Worse still, according to a Canadian expert, Professor Merritt R. Turetsky of Guelph University, the permafrost plays another, absolutely vital, but neglected role of turning loose earth into rock solid ice as long as the earth remains frozen. If the hard permafrost core melts and turns into water it will turn the earth into an uncontrollable collapsing mass that may disrupt large areas. One recent finding by a team of scientists seems to vindicate Turetsky's theory of an earthquake-like scenario of permafrost melting. The finding concerns the oceanic underground of the East Siberian Sea, where scientists onboard the Akademik Keldysh research vessel

found a huge gas fountain causing a methane concentration nine times higher than elsewhere on the planet.

Such turbulent permafrost melting poses huge problems for communities around the Arctic. Roads buckle, houses become unstable and the supply of food is endangered when hunters cannot access their game traps. The phenomenon is hitting one fifth of the permafrost areas of the Northern hemisphere and may itself double the emission of carbon dioxides until 2300, conclude Turetsky and her co-authors. All in all, we may be facing a much less controllable scenario of climate change worldwide than earlier calculated by scientists. One illustrative case of turbulent permafrost melting is the crater of Batagaika in the Sakha Republic (Siberia) known by local Yakuts as the entry into the underworld. The crater is one kilometer long and 100 meter deep and was borne by deforestation in the 1960s. The sudden disappearance of shade from surrounding trees during summers warmed the surface of the earth and made the ice disappear and caused a collapse that created this huge thermokarst depression that still grows. The policy implication cited by Turetsky and her colleagues is that mankind must take determined steps to keep permafrost frozen and the carbon materials frozen with it through reduced carbon dioxide emissions – in short through a determined effort of climate crisis mitigation.

This summer's wildfires in the Siberian tundra forests may dramatically worsen permafrost melting. A state of emergency had to be declared throughout four vast regions. Only after almost one million citizens had signed two petitions protesting against the laissez faire policy of not extinguishing the fire pursued by regional authorities did things change. The laissez faire policy, in turn, is rooted in the meagre funds allocated by Moscow for Russian regional authorities combined with a counterproductive law of 2015 giving governors the right not to extinguish fires if the cost of doing so exceeds the damage done. The devil in the detail here is the sloppy principles guiding the Russian calculation of the cost of damage done by blazes meaning that the 2015 law marks a return to the disastrous Soviet environmental practices.

“The Moscow centre may finally be awakening to the need for taking action against the climate crisis.”

The good news is that the Moscow centre may finally be awakening to the need for taking action against the climate crisis. According to Russian news reports, the Kremlin is planning to set up an officially approved Green Party to accommodate to the newfound public concern about environmental issues. The dilemma for foreign partners like Denmark is that, if launched, such a Kremlin construction may prove to lack both clout and legitimacy. But in theory, it opens avenues for constructive dialogue. To the extent that there is a civil society-based Russian lobby for climate action, it is one of broader environmentalism, e.g. protest against dump sites polluting the air with toxic fumes. One among many vocal Russian environmentalists is Evgenia Chirikova who is speaking about the damaging effects from Nord Stream 2 upon the nomadic lifestyle of the indigenous peoples on the Yamal Peninsula.

## On geoengineering

Geoengineering refers to technologies that aim to make large-scale interventions in the climate system possible, a case in point being solar geoengineering such as solar radiation management, planetary albedo modification or stratospheric aerosol injection. So once again I draw on the specialized climate policy research of Olaf Corry as source below when no other source is cited.

First, it is important to realize that geoengineering to some extent remains a fantasy rather than an operational technological option for states. Corry calls it a sociotechnical imaginary as it has gained prominence as the discursive 'plan B' among climate experts and some decision-makers growing impatient with global passivity towards the climate crisis, plan A representing the alternative of long-term, determined climate change mitigation along the lines of the Paris Agreement of December 2015. The purpose in Corry's analysis is to demonstrate the fatal 'security hazard' built into the logic of geoengineering even in situations when no geoengineering takes place at all. The root problem is the structural anarchy among sovereign states as key actors in a world of climate crisis and hence the uncertainty about the intentions of other states that it brings; something that serves to create what political science security experts call the security dilemma among states. Because of their presumably powerful effect upon the causes behind climate change, such new technologies can create security problems that compromise the original aim of preventing risk.

He elaborates on three types of security hazards at the level of interstate politics and limits his analysis to when states embark on just 'reluctant geoengineering' – investing mainly in research for the sake of developing an operational stratospheric aerosol injection capacity for taking short-term action against warming. To mention but one challenge built into such geoengineering Research & Development efforts by states, China's climatic interests might conflict with India's concerning their dependency upon the monsoon, a dramatic problem of perception and possible misperception that is openly acknowledged by one proponent of research into this option, namely David Keith.

In order not to bring about great power war or just endanger vulnerable states with no reciprocal geoengineering capacity it is imperative, says Keith, to first establish a system of international governance for geoengineering. Otherwise the technology or just the suspicion that "our neighboring state has it and uses it against us" may turn geoengineering into something as fatal as the nuclear bomb. Because geoengineering technology is so cheap that "... *almost any nation could afford to alter the earth's climate, a fact that may accelerate the shifting balance of global power, raising security concerns that could, in the worst case, lead to war*". In other words, the huge, but neglected problem about this type of geoengineering is that it puts a premium on unilateral action just like cyber and hacking technologies do. Accordingly, geoengineering brings temptations of free-driving (as opposed to free-riding) – in short of rogue climate engineering. Furthermore, geo- or climate engineering may foster the securitisation of climate policy to the detriment of precaution and climate change governance. Once (fears of) geoengineering schemes are out of Pandora's box "the weather would suddenly be attri-

butable to somebody” and result in politics of panics, for instance, between India and Pakistan; in or around Israel. As for free-riding, the “unbearable lightness of geoengineering” if I may say so, could be what led the Trump administration to jump ship on the Paris Agreement.

“Geoengineering holds a false promise of turning climate policy into a kind of normal politics..”

In other words, geoengineering is no quick fix but a dramatically complicating factor that at minimum draws attention away from enlightened and steady climate change mitigation. It holds a false promise of turning climate policy into a kind of normal politics, but will very likely end up securitising everything. In a recent interview, Corry urges us “... to realise that geoengineering is no reverse bringing us back to the old climate. It will take us forward to a third climate neither like the preindustrial climate nor the currently unfolding scenario of a changing climate that is to some extent familiar to scientists. Systems of precipitation may change in unknown ways, the acidification of seas will continue to complicate things etc.” . Corry is not alone when arguing such disruptive security dynamics from geoengineering. The British weekly *The Economist* constructed an “*If geoengineering goes rogue*” scenario and wrote that “... powerful countries (say, Russia/MS) would no doubt see climatic changes imposed on them as a security threat”.

Likewise, the long-term prognosis of the U.S. National Intelligence Council stresses the danger of geoengineering unilateralism (i.e. free-driving) by technologically savvy states. For these reasons, geoengineering is not a feasible plan B for Russia, nor Denmark or any other Arctic victim of the climate crisis.

“Geoengineering is not a feasible plan B for Russia, nor Denmark or any other Arctic victim of the climate crisis.”

### **Summing up the findings**

The above contribution to the report on Arctic and Baltic interfaces between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Russia Federation examined the Arctic climate crisis with respect to Russia and offered a stocktaking of Russian climate policy against the background of Russia’s accession to the Paris Climate Agreement on September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019. Core findings are:

- The climate crisis interdependence between the entire Arctic region and the Russian Federation may be utilized as platform for climate dialogue between the two parties about best practices within climate change mitigation.
- Global warming hits Russia stronger than other parts of the planet. The Russian level of rising temperatures is up to 2.5 times higher than the world average according to the meteorological office Roshydromet. Fertile agricultural regions will become arid; disasters, epidemic diseases etc. will be more frequent bringing huge economic losses.

- International research has established that the ongoing melting of the permafrost – now covering two thirds of the territory of the Russian Federation – will not be a slow process giving ample warning time. On the contrary, it will cause sudden earthquake-like breakdowns creating huge thermokarst depressions damaging oil, gas, railway and housing infrastructures as well as nomadic life styles of locals living in Russia’s north.
- Conceptually and as for policy implications, the analysis pointed to the golden mean of riskification invented by Olaf Corry as the way to proceed. The alternative of relying on future geoengineering is uniquely dangerous because – like cyber warfare and digital hacking technologies – geoengineering puts a premium on offensive action and will escalate security dilemmas and fatal misperceptions. Should geoengineering ever become a reality it will not turn the climate clock backwards, but forward to a “brave new world” of climate turbulence – one of “unknown unknowns” for climate science.
- The decidedly good news is the Kremlin’s emerging embrace of an activist climate change mitigation policy including the possible formation a legal Green Party. In theory, this new trend could further genuine dialogue between Denmark and Russia on best practices on climate crisis management. Outreach to Russian environmentalists and Arctic indigenous peoples would be an equally important step.



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## Russian International Affairs Council

The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) is a non-profit international relations think tank on a mission to provide policy recommendations for all of the Russian organizations involved in external affairs.

RIAC engages experts, statesmen, entrepreneurs and members of civil society in public discussions with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of Russian foreign policy.

Along with research and analysis, RIAC is involved in educational activities aimed at creating a solid network of young global affairs and diplomacy experts.

RIAC is an active player on the public diplomacy arena, presenting Russia's vision on the key issues of global development on the international stage.

RIAC members are the leaders of Russia's foreign affairs community – diplomats, businesspeople, scholars, public leaders and journalists.

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## **The Danish Foreign Policy Society**

The Danish Foreign Policy Society is a private, non-profit organisation founded in 1946 with the aim of promoting interest and raising awareness on foreign policy and international affairs in Denmark.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Frederik is the Patron of the Society. A former minister Lykke Friis chairs the Board, and the Executive Director Charlotte Flindt Pedersen carries out the daily management of the Society.

The Danish Foreign Policy Society is independent from political as well as commercial interests. The Society does not take a stand on political issues, but merely engages in debates by conveying and sharing information and contacts. The Society has around 1000 personal members and 200 members representing around 50 companies and institutions. The Society has a Youth Branch, DUS-U35, with around 200 members.

## Notes

**Russian International Affairs Council**  
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Any linguistic inadequacies in the publication  
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