



DIIS REPORT

**PERSPECTIVES ON SECURITY
IN THE ARCTIC AREA**

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|--|
| AC | Arctic Council |
| AEPS | Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy |
| AGP | The Arctic Governance Project |
| CBSS | Council of Baltic Sea States |
| BEAC | Barents-Euro Arctic Council |
| CIMIC | Civil-Military Cooperation |
| CLMS | Commission for the Limits of the Continental Shelf |
| COP15 | United Nation's Climate Change Conference |
| DDC | Danish Defence Commission |
| EU | European Union |
| HRG | Home Rule Government |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NCM | Nordic Council of Ministers |
| ND | Northern Dimension |
| SAR | Search and Rescue |
| SAO | Senior Arctic Officials |
| WMO | World Metrological Organisation |

Executive summary

This report provides multiple perspectives on security in the Arctic area. A key objective is to demonstrate that, although the Arctic is the site of competing natural resources and land claims, which are emerging from such phenomena as melting ice and new sea routes, there are also many signs of fruitful regional cooperation and sound neighbourly relations. This thesis is supported by the high level of Arctic institutionalisation that has evolved since the end of the Cold War. Despite this, some media outlets have routinely portrayed the Arctic as a possible site of inter-state conflict. Such accounts do not take sufficient account of the collaborative initiatives that take place within the Arctic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the European Union, to mention a few. The Arctic is situated within a complex web of multilateral and bilateral networks, ranging from states to regional institutions. What is more, there is a great deal of emphasis on the involvement of indigenous and local communities in key decision-making processes. This is not to argue that there are no challenges to security and prosperity in the Arctic area, but rather that we need to investigate these against the backdrop of the ongoing institutionalisation of the High North.

Part 1 of the report provides a brief historical account of the Arctic by asking whether there are any previous events that can provide insights into the current situation in the region? A relevant example here is the wish to make the Arctic a 'zone of peace' in the 1980s. The report then offers an examination of the relatively high level of institutionalisation and governance in the Circumpolar North and determines what the key challenges to these are. For example, it is argued that the Arctic Council (AC) might need to rethink its position on banning the sensitive subject of military security from its policy deliberations in favour of an open, peaceful and democratic security dialogue, without this necessarily giving rise to tensions between AC members.

Part 2 of the report provides a discussion of contemporary security developments in the Arctic by placing the emphasis on the relationship between climate change and strategic interests related to sovereign claims. The report takes issue with the frequent portrayal of the Arctic as a hotspot for potential conflict by arguing that, although there are unresolved territorial disputes between the Arctic coastal states, there is also broad commitment to Arctic peace and stability through multilateral cooperation and governance.

Part 3 offers a rather brief overview of Danish Arctic policy with emphasis on both non-military and military developments. It is argued that climate change is the key to contemporary Danish security policy in relation to the Arctic. Part 4 argues that broad dialogue between states and people plus multilevel participation in decision-making processes are central to the creation of new spheres of regional community that exist alongside other loyalties. The discussion is inspired by the political theory of Andrew Linklater and makes a case for new forms of commonality and solidarity across the Circumpolar North. It is suggested that any new policy initiatives – unilateral and multilateral – need to be coupled with local bottom-up activities and transnational civil support, so as to give voice to those who are directly affected by the new policy decisions. The report ends with a brief conclusion that summarises the key findings and offers the following policy recommendations:

Box 1. Policy recommendations

1. The Arctic states should continue to promote global governance and international cooperation as ways of ensuring future stability, prosperity and peace in the Arctic region. Institutions such as the AC can serve to counterbalance an emergent tendency amongst the Arctic coastal states to pursue narrowly defined national interests and sovereign claims in the Circumpolar North. Key here is open and inclusive dialogue between governments, regional institutions and representatives from indigenous and local communities.
2. Arctic coastal states need to refrain from using the concept of sovereignty in a manner that hampers stability and peace in the Circumpolar North. This involves conceptualising sovereignty in an other-regarding manner that does not centre on national security and defence alone. In so doing the Arctic states could promote a conception of sovereignty that promotes the rights of both people and sovereign states, rather than the latter alone. Such an approach to sovereignty is in line with the emphasis placed upon the emergent global norms of responsibility to protect and human security that underpin contemporary international society. What is more, the Arctic actors should continue to promote international law (and abide by it), since this a way of avoiding verbal and other disputes that are detrimental to global peace and cooperation. It is nonetheless important that states refrain from using international law to further their own narrowly defined interests, since this can be damaging to international governance and security.
3. Despite frequently having been placed within the framework of Realpolitik, the Arctic is a fruitful site for community-building clustered around good inter-state relations and the productive involvement of indigenous and local populations in key decision-making processes. The 'alarmism' that has been associated with the Arctic through media constructions, for example, is detrimental to the emergence of new spheres of community and loyalties in the Circumpolar North and should, when possible, be resisted.

Introduction¹

Global media outlets have on occasion portrayed the Arctic as a potential site for inter-state conflict, despite the unprecedented level of global governance that defines the region. The Arctic is situated within a complex web of multilateral and bilateral networks embracing large and small states, regional institutions such as the European Union (EU) and the Arctic Council (AC), as well as indigenous and local communities. The regional institutions that operate in the Arctic do not deal with military security but focus on non-military threats to stability and peace, including the negative effects of climate change. For instance, the Arctic Council (AC) (1996: 2) has explicitly refrained from dealing with 'matters related to military security' to facilitate new forms of multilateral collaboration between states with diverse outlooks on international politics. So far this has been a useful tactic leading the members of the AC to strengthen their links and engage in new forms of cooperation in order to overcome old hostilities in favour of a collective non-military approach to regional security. An important dimension to this project has been to involve regional and indigenous communities actively in key decision-making processes, which can add credibility to new policy directions.

This is not to suggest that debates about military security are entirely absent from inter-state relations in the Arctic, but rather that they are not the subject of formal discussions within places like the AC. Non-military security issues, including melting ice sheets, new sea routes, competition for renewable and non-renewable natural resources and sovereignty disputes, linked to melting ice and climate change more broadly, are certainly high on the joint Arctic agenda. From this it follows that it is unhelpful to draw too sharp a distinction between military and non-military threats since they are often intertwined and need to be analysed together. Both non-military and military perspectives on security will be discussed below, but the emphasis will be on the former, including such things as the institutionalisation of the Arctic and the emergence of what could be defined as an Arctic sphere of community.

While making some general claims about contemporary developments about the Arctic region, the report also discusses Denmark's distinct interests in the region,

¹ In this report concepts such as the Arctic, the Circumpolar North and the High North will be used interchangeably.

which originate from its historical, political and cultural links with Greenland. Although the island was granted self-rule in 2009, which gave it more independent power over its gas, gold and diamond reserves, Greenland remains key to Danish foreign and security policy and vice versa.

On 31 March 2009 the Danish Parliament held an Arctic conference to mark its two-year chairmanship of the Arctic Council, which ended in May 2011 when the reins were handed over to Sweden. In December 2009 Denmark hosted the United Nation's Climate Change Conference, COP15, and it held the chair of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2010. Furthermore, on 17 September 2010 the Danish Institute for International Studies, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Nordic Council organised a conference on Samarbejde i Østersøen og Arktis: inspiration fra Stoltenberg, held at Christiansborg. What is more, on the 24th of August 2011 the Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020 was released (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011b). In sum, the Arctic is key to Danish foreign policy, and the aim here is to shed light on some of the key developments in this field.

Objectives and structure

The main objective of this report is to offer a broad discussion of the contemporary institutional and security developments that currently face the Arctic region. Methodologically, the present author has chosen to conduct an empirical study that uses the concept of security in an orthodox policy-focused way. In this report, security is nonetheless treated as an analytical category that embraces both military and non-military developments. By the same token, institutions are narrowly interpreted to include regional and international organisations rather than other institutions such as global norms, rules and regulations.

Part 1 of the report offers a brief historical account of the Arctic by pointing to previous security dilemmas facing the region and asks whether these can provide any insights into the current situation. It then turns to the high level of institutionalisation and governance in the Arctic in an effort to unpack the multilateral and institutionalising initiatives undertaken by the Arctic states, as well as assess some of the key challenges to these. The overall argument is that such multilateralism is key to the community-building efforts currently unfolding in the Circumpolar North – an idea which is further developed in part 3 of the report – but that there is room for more institutional efficiency.

Part 2 provides a concise discussion of some of the contemporary security dilemmas facing the Arctic. The first section examines the relationship between climate change and strategic interests related to sovereign claims in the region. One of the objectives is to challenge the frequent portrayal of the Arctic as a hotspot for potential conflict by arguing that, although there are some unresolved territorial disputes between the Arctic coastal states, there is also broad commitment to Arctic peace and stability through multilateral cooperation and governance. Too much emphasis on such disputes is inconsistent with the Arctic states' collective commitment to 'global and regional action' and the wish 'to collaborate closely in international fora on environmental protection and sustainable development' and, 'when appropriate, request the AC to deliver jointly agreed Arctic messages' (AC, 2002: 5). As the Danish Minister for Nordic Cooperation, Karen Elleman, has argued 'the Arctic is not – and will not – be an area of conflict, no matter how much of the ice sheet should melt or how fast. All Arctic states agree on a peaceful future for the Arctic' (cited in the Nordic Council of Ministers 2010: 14).

Part 3 offers a brief overview of Danish Arctic policy with an emphasis on both non-military and military developments. Not surprisingly, it is argued that climate change is key to contemporary Danish security policy in relation to the Arctic. Key documents such as the Danish Defence Decision of 2010-2014 are consulted so as to identify the key directions in Denmark's position on the Arctic. Greenland and the Thule base are considered in this context. This part of the report ends by pointing to the importance of combining civil and military measures in dealing with some of the key challenges of the Arctic.

Part 4 puts forward the idea that broad dialogue between nations and people and multilevel participation in decision-making processes are central to the creation of new spheres of regional community that exist alongside other loyalties. The discussion is inspired by the political theory of Andrew Linklater and makes a case for new forms of commonality and solidarity across the Circumpolar North. It is suggested that any new policy initiatives – unilateral and multilateral – need to be coupled with local bottom-up activities and transnational civil support so as to give voice to those who are directly affected by new policy decisions. This is a position that is shared by the Arctic states themselves, but is nonetheless worth reiterating here. Such involvement can make a positive contribution to building a civic consensus across borders on issues that directly impact on local communities, including the effects of climate change on local economies, trade and issues to do with human health.

Key here is open dialogue between governments, non-governmental organisations, local groups and multilateral bodies and ensuring that indigenous and regional voices are not excluded from decision-making processes. This is not to ignore issues of strategic importance or hard security matters, but to suggest that the abundance of institutions in the Arctic and the involvement of indigenous populations in these reveal a commitment to a shared Arctic community across national borders. The final point made below is that Denmark, like the other Nordic states, could make a significant contribution to the Arctic by promoting an alternative understanding of the region that reflects typically *old style* Nordic values of internationalism, non-proliferation, mediation, democracy, tolerance and welfarism so as to counteract the media's portrayal of the Arctic as an area tainted by statist quests for power and territorial gains. The report ends with a brief conclusion that summarises the key findings and proposals that have been identified throughout.

PART ONE. Brief history, governance and institutions

A brief historical account of the Arctic

Geographically the Arctic is the area north of the Arctic Circle (66° 33'N) encompassing the five Nordic states, Russia, Canada and the USA, all of which possess Arctic territories. For long the Circumpolar North was associated with polar exploration and attempts to document the distinctiveness of its landmass, fauna and flora. Map 1 below shows the geographical position of the Arctic and the states that are situated in the region.

Map 1. The Arctic region



http://www.google.dk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.yourchildlearns.com/online-atlas/continent/images/arctic.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.yourchildlearns.com/online-atlas/continent/arctic-map.htm&usq=__V6-BbQ73Jey4vew0Xo7EGTYEjFM=&h=663&w=804&sz=117&chl=da&start=9&zooom=1&um=1&itbs=1&tbnid=Y9ovzDUm9NGM4M:&tbnh=118&tbnw=143&prev=/search%3Fq%3DThe%2BArctic%2BRegiona%26um%3D1%26hl%3Dda%26sa%3DN%26biw%3D996%26bih%3D574%26tbn%3Disch&ei=YRfNTaSwJrCq-AbHmL29DA

The Arctic during the Cold War

During the Cold War the geopolitical situation in the Arctic was caught up in the overall bipolar tension between the United States of America (USA) and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). During this period, 'militarisation determined the character of the Arctic to such an extent that it was used by some observers as a way of distinguishing the Arctic from [the] Antarctic' (Palosaari and Möller, 2003: 259). Clive Archer and David Scrivener (1982), for example, pointed to the potential threat to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) posed by operations carried out by the Soviet Northern Fleet in the North Atlantic in the early 1980s. Furthermore, in their edited volume *Northern Waters*, published in 1986, the same authors provide a collection of chapters that all address the security situation in the Circumpolar North in the 1980s, by focusing either on matters relating to hard security concerns or issues of resource exploitation etc., many of which seem oddly familiar to contemporary observers of Arctic affairs (Archer and Scrivener, 1986). During this period there were fewer attempts to institutionalise the region or to take account of the specific needs of local indigenous and other populations (Palosaari and Möller, 2003: 259).

In the late 1970s the Arctic was given a great deal of attention as a result of the exploitation of oil and gas resources in the North. In the 1980s the two superpowers started to explore ways of reducing the rivalry between them, which was facilitated by the rise to power of a reform-communist Soviet president, Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev delivered a key speech in Murmansk in 1987 in which he envisaged the Arctic as potentially the site of 'an immense potential of nuclear destruction concentrated aboard submarines and surface ships' that 'affects the political climate of the entire world and can be detonated by an accidental political-military conflict in any other region of the world'. However, he also stressed that 'contemporary civilization could permit us to make the Arctic habitable for the benefit of the national economies and other human interests of the near-Arctic states, for Europe and the entire international community. To achieve this, security problems that have accumulated in the area should be resolved above all-... Let the North of the globe, the Arctic, become a zone of peace. Let the North Pole be a pole of peace' (Gorbachev, 1987: 4-5).

The speech was very timely and could be viewed as a response to the wider environmental and security concerns of the late 1980s. Carina Keskitalo (2007: 195) has nonetheless argued that Gorbachev's speech should also be seen as part of the greater efforts on the part of the USSR to 'develop its offshore industry in the Barents Sea without having to turn directly to the USA'. Gorbachev's ideas about

'human interests' and a 'zone of peace' remain central to contemporary debates on Arctic security, not the least as a way of ensuring that national economic and security interests are not maximised at the expense of 'human interests'. What is more, Gorbachev's speech inspired new ideas about environmental protection, which in turn resulted in the non-binding Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) signed by the eight Arctic states in 1991. Out of the AEPS emerged the idea of an Arctic Council, which was established in 1996. It was a distinctively Canadian initiative evolving out of the country's longstanding geopolitical interest in the Arctic region and also as a response to the needs of its indigenous communities. Adding a distinct popular dimension to multilateral Arctic policies revealed an initial willingness to address security challenges to the High North on a broad basis involving both government actors and civilian groups and is perhaps one of the key lessons from the period. Indeed, it remains an effective way of creating a 'zone of peace' in the Arctic area since new forms of political community rest upon popular support as well as state-driven initiatives, rather than narrowly defined national interests alone. Below the attempts on the part of Arctic states to further their collaborative efforts in the Circumpolar North are examined, followed by an assessment of the key challenges to such multilateral undertakings.

The aftermath of the Cold War

In the aftermath of the Cold War there was a great deal of momentum for change, with new forms of regionalism and governance emerging that captured the optimism of the period. The idea of a new post-Cold War world order based upon multilateralism and international cooperation, the re-entry of former communist states on to the world stage and the subsequent plans to enlarge the European Union (EU) and NATO added to this optimism. In the 1990s a number of new regional initiatives were launched, including the AC, the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) to name a few. This period in global politics was also one of disintegration, with violent conflict and genocide spreading rapidly in places like the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. The Arctic area was not subjected to such tragedy – quite the opposite – the end of the Cold War led to new thinking on how to integrate the Arctic states further through various institutional structures. Hence, despite having 'lost its prominent military position' in the early 1990s, the Arctic did not enter a period of 'demarginalisation' because a number of regional initiatives were put in place to avoid this (Palosaari and Möller, 2003: 255). The Arctic was envisaged as an area requiring multiple layers of integration and governance involving different kinds of actors ranging from national governments to indigenous communities.

The Arctic and governance

Governance is a concept that has figured large in the context of Arctic cooperation. However, its precise meaning is debatable since it is not an easily defined concept but has several meanings, one of which refers to the exercise of different forms of power – discursive, financial and in some cases military power – without this necessarily being overseen by an overarching political or other authority. Governance is different from government since the former describes how binding decisions are taken without automatically resting upon formal legislative processes or traditional decision-making procedures. The Commission on Global Governance (1995: 4) defined it as

the sum of many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest.

The actors of governance, whether political, economic or cultural, are often loosely connected with one another, although this does not have to be the case. Decisions are taken by many different actors at multiple levels. In the words of Jan Aart Scholte, ‘governance in the more global world of the twenty-first century has become distinctively multi-layered and trans-scalar. Regulation occurs at – and through interconnectedness among – municipal, provincial, national, macro-regional and global sites’ (Scholte, 2005: 186). Good governance at home and across borders is generally assumed to impact positively upon regional and global stability and integration. This explains why states that seek membership of regional bodies such as the European Union are asked to comply with the entry criterion of good governance before being granted full membership of such organisations or given a loan by a global financial institution.

Critical governance studies and the Arctic

The emergent academic field of critical governance studies, associated with the University of Warwick, UK, focuses on the shortcomings of the concept of governance by among other things pointing to the tendency of networks to be closed and therefore hard to shape, review and penetrate (Warwick University, 2011). As a consequence, it can be difficult to know how states and other actors arrive at certain decisions and what deliberations have preceded them. A relevant question to ask in the Arctic context is whether the institutional frameworks of the region offer differ-

ent types of actors an equal opportunity to impact upon important decision-making processes? For example, to what extent are indigenous and local groups represented in multilateral deliberations in the Arctic area? Critical governance scholarship thus asks relevant questions about the character of the region under scrutiny so as to learn about its distinctive problems and prospects. For example, are we dealing with a region of economic growth, a security community or a zone of peace, or indeed all three, and what institutions are needed for the specific purpose of sustaining such regions? Finally, a critical governance approach asks the highly normative question what kind of region we wish to (and should) create?

All these questions are relevant in the Arctic context, in particular the normative question of what kind of region we would like to create. Moreover, we might want to ask whether the presence of too many regional institutions in the Arctic could lead to inefficiencies and overlapping policies. However, from a liberal international relations (IR) perspective, it is not the existence of too many multilateral bodies that is likely to create problems, but the lack of international cooperation and institutions. Institutional sedimentation is generally seen as a way of preserving good inter-state relations and stability in the economic and security domains. Seen from this perspective, the Arctic states are heading in the right direction by promoting further Arctic integration, not the least within the context of the AC.

The Arctic region is thus embedded in a number of different institutional arrangements, many of which have similar normative and policy goals. What is more, a defining feature of the Arctic is the deliberate attempt to establish institutional connectivity between the many different actors in the region and beyond as a way of promoting common goals and shared initiatives, which in turn reduces unnecessary overlapping.

The Arctic Governance Project (AGP)

The AGP, which brings together a number of researchers and policy-makers and representatives from indigenous communities, is perhaps the most concerted conceptual effort to think through ways in which Arctic governance can be made more efficient and normatively justifiable in terms of fostering stability and peace in the High North (AGP 2010: 2). The project identifies a number of measures that can be taken to improve upon the current governance systems of the Arctic, including the 'identification of critical questions regarding needs for governance, the formulation of normative guidelines or principles pertaining to governance, and the development of a perspective that emphasizes stewardship as an overarching goal' (ibid.). More specifically, this involves such things as 'building trust, enhancing regulatory fram-

eworks, introducing holistic approaches, promoting adaptation, securing the Arctic as a zone of peace, achieving regional sustainability, strengthening policy mechanisms, and amplifying Arctic voices in global settings' (ibid.: 2).

Another key claim is that 'good governance' depends on 'honoring, implementing, and enhancing the provisions of existing treaties', in which respects the Arctic Council is identified as an important actor (ibid.). To this should be added that the Arctic does not exist in isolation from the rest of the world but is bound up with global issues of 'climate change and globalization' more broadly (ibid.). A final note here is that the AGP places a great deal of emphasis on the presence of indigenous and local communities within the many formal and informal processes of Arctic governance. It does this first, by advocating their active involvement in formal policy-making procedures within the Arctic Council and other institutions (AGP 2010), and secondly, by recognising the positive impact that 'indigenous governance' can have on Arctic governance more broadly. Gail Fondahl and Stephanie Irlbacher Fox (2009: 5) define 'indigenous governance' as 'forms of social and political organization, and decision-making of indigenous peoples informed by the imperatives of their unique cultures and world views'. This way of thinking is in line with the ideas and recommendations put forward in the last part of this report. Yet to further civil cooperation between different national and subnational communities across borders is not an entirely unproblematic process in the Circumpolar North, in particular since many areas are inhabitable and not plausible candidates for projects of 'civil regionalization' (Bergman, 2006). Put simply, new transnational loyalties depend on the active involvement of individual human beings who are willing to identify new forms of civil cooperation and shared interests.

However, by facilitating the involvement of local and indigenous communities in formal decision-making structures and by seriously considering their distinct experiences with regard to the functioning of local economies and decision-making procedures, the formal institutions of the High North can add legitimacy to the Arctic governance project. What follows below is a brief outline of the various regional constellations that have emerged in the Arctic and the specific challenges and positive effects related to these. Three key recommendations are presented, all of which point to the significance of multilateralism, civil engagement, open networks and democratically inspired forms of governance as ways of fostering stable and peaceful relations between the Arctic states. Table 1 below presents an overview of the key institutions that operate in the Arctic, as well as their members and founding objectives.

Table I. Membership and objectives of Arctic institutions and cooperation

| <i>Institution</i> | <i>Membership</i> | <i>Overall objectives</i> |
|---|--|---|
| <i>The Arctic Council</i> | Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States of America. Permanent Participants such as indigenous organisations. The European Union is seeking observer status in the AC. | Founded in 1996 as an intergovernmental forum for the promotion of 'cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic Indigenous communities'. |
| <i>The Nordic Council of Ministers' Arctic Co-operation Programme 2009–2011</i> | The five Nordic states, Greenland, Faroe Islands and Åland Islands. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'contribute to increased knowledge of ... climate change' 2. improve the quality of life of the Arctic population 3. and their social and cultural development 4. preserving nature in the Arctic |
| <i>The Barents Euro-Arctic Council</i> | Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop the Barents region 'socially and economically' 2. Increase the region's competitiveness 3. Contribute to 'cohesion, good governance and sustainable growth' |
| <i>The European Union: The Northern Dimensions</i> | The European Union, Norway, Iceland and the Russian Federation. | <p>1st Northern Dimension established in 1999 and the second one in 2006 as</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'a common framework for the promotion of dialogue and concrete cooperation' 2. to promote 'stability and well being' 3. 'intensify economic cooperation and promote economic integration' etc. |
| <i>The European Union and Emergent Arctic Policy</i> | The European Union | An EU Council Declaration on Arctic Issues adopted in 2009 which affirmed the Union's support for 'an EU policy on Arctic issues' based upon, amongst other things, 'reinforced multilateral governance ... the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea' (Council of the European Union, 2009: 1). |

Sources: AC 2007; NCM 2009, BEAC 2010; EU 2010;

The institutions of the Arctic region: governance in practice

The Arctic Council

As noted above, the AC has been associated with the Canadian government's attempt to place the Arctic at the centre of its foreign policy and global politics in general. The AC was established on the 19th of September 1996 in the Canadian capital Ottawa to replace the AEPS. It was to act as 'a high level intergovernmental forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States' (AC, 2007: 1). Through the establishment of the AC, the Arctic states indicated their commitment to governance and new forms of international cooperation by establishing a new body for intergovernmental relations, though stopping short of supranational arrangements such as those defining European integration. What defines the EU is that a number of the decision-making powers are delegated to institutions such as the European Commission and Parliament: in the case of the AC the individual members retain those powers. In signing the Declaration on the Establishment of the AC, the member-state governments affirmed their commitment to the following:

- the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic, as well as acknowledging their capacity to impact positively upon the Arctic.
- sustainable development in the Arctic region, including economic, social development and improving people's health conditions
- the protection of the Arctic environment (AC, 1996: 1)

Ideas about grounding decisions within 'the traditional knowledge of the indigenous people of the Arctic' and 'promoting cooperative activities to address Arctic issues', as well as 'full consultation with and the involvement of indigenous people and their communities' (AC, 1996: 1), penetrate every level of the AC machinery. The member states were determined early in the process to involve indigenous people in both their deliberations and the implementation of concrete policies that affect local communities. And, as has been argued above, ensuring that policy networks are not closed, but open and democratic, is central to successful processes of governance.

The contemporary AC agenda: objectives

The contemporary policy objectives of the AC are many and diverse, although most of them can in one way or another be linked with climate change. On 29 April 2009 the Arctic states gathered in Tromsø, where they agreed on a number of key priorities, including climate change, support for the Polar Year (scientific research in the polar regions), the Arctic marine environment, human health and human development,

energy, biodiversity and the administration of the AC (AC, 2009: 1-8). They also issued the 'Tromsø Declaration', expressing their strong commitment to the 'Arctic environment and protecting the Arctic against potentially irreversible impacts of anthropogenic climate change', and recognizing the danger of such things as 'black carbon, methane and tropospheric ozone precursors' and their impact on the Arctic climate (ibid.). Furthermore, the Arctic ministers called for 'an effective global response' to climate change rather than unilateral responses, while emphasizing that 'indigenous peoples in the Arctic' should take 'a leading role to use best available traditional and scientific knowledge to help understand and adapt to challenges related to climate change' (ibid.). The Senior Arctic Officials report of 2010 echoed the 2009 message on climate change by emphasizing the need to find common solutions to issues of climate change and natural resources, as well as ensuring the active involvement of indigenous populations in key decision-making procedures (AC, 2010).

The AC has also affirmed its support for 'the establishment of a Task Force (TF) to develop and complete negotiation by the next Ministerial meeting in 2011 of an international instrument on cooperation on search and rescue (SAR) operations in the Arctic' (Arctic Council, 2010: 7). This commitment came into effect on 12 May 2011 when the Arctic Ministers for Foreign Affairs signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of 'Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue' as a way of responding to accidents in the Circumpolar North. The agreement is seen as a major step forward in the Arctic integrationist process, since it is the 'first legally binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council' (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011: 1). The AC states have hitherto refrained from entering into legally binding agreements, preferring a much looser form of cooperation.

On the institutional level, the AC has recently decided to establish a secretariat to enable it to become a more effective regional institution in the future (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011: 1). This could be seen as the AC's attempt to transform itself from a loose institution into a more formal one in an effort to raise its profile on the international stage, in particular since this has been linked with a move towards the adoption of a legally binding decision on the Arctic SAR Task Force.

The operation of the AC

The operational running of the AC is the responsibility of the state that holds the chairmanship. Denmark held the chairmanship between 2009 and 2011, and Sweden took over this role on 12 May 2011. The rotating chairmanship gives each state a sense of equal status within the AC, regardless of size. As noted previously, the AC

operates on an intergovernmental basis since decisions are taken by consensus, thus giving the ultimate decision-making powers to the governments of the individual member states.

An AC secretariat was established in Tromsø in 2007 to support the Norwegian, Danish and Swedish chairmanships spanning from 2006 to 2012, but this was more of an ad-hoc arrangement rather than a permanent feature of the AC. However, as has been noted above, the AC foreign ministers recently agreed on the establishment of a permanent secretariat to enable the AC to become more effective as a regional institution in the future (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011: 1). It is conceivable that such a body will add clout to the AC in global politics more broadly by demonstrating a higher level of commitment to Arctic cooperation on the part of its members.

The ministerial meetings of the AC take place biennially, which does not seem that often. However, the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) meet every six months in the country hosting the AC (SAO, 2011). Their reports are very thorough and serve to prepare for the biennial meetings. For example, their 2010 report deals with a number of issue areas related to natural resources, climate change and the situation of indigenous peoples (SAO, 2010).

In order to improve the distribution of AC news to a global audience, the SAO decided in 2010 to establish 'a contact group to work intersessionally on the issue of communication and outreach' for the purpose of strengthening the AC's 'voice' and to ensure that its members speak with one voice (AC 2010: 3-4). This is an attempt to deal with the issue of 'information concerning the AC's initiatives and successes ... not reaching a wider audience, i.e. the Arctic Council has a good story to tell but word is not getting out' (AC, 2011: 3b). Collective efforts to promote joint communications and outward-looking activities could also be seen as significant pillars in the building of an Arctic community and identity.

The work of the AC is divided into six different working groups, each of which focus on 'monitoring, assessing and preventing pollution in the Arctic, climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, emergency preparedness and prevention in addition to the living conditions of the Arctic residents' (AC, undated). As already noted none of these working groups deal with military security issues, a conscious decision to avoid unnecessary disagreements emerging between the member states.

A Scandinavian common agenda: raising the efficiency of the AC?

The three Scandinavian states of Denmark, Norway and Sweden have demonstrated their willingness to coordinate their Arctic policies by launching a common policy agenda covering their successive chairmanships of the AC (2006-2012), and thus seeking to reproduce some of the positive legacies of inter-Nordic co-operation in other fields. The idea is that such a joint agenda will enable them to promote their common priorities and objectives and make a key contribution to the consensus building work of the AC. Such measures deliver coherence to Arctic governance and hopefully prevent too much institutional overlapping from taking place.

The AC as a normative power

The power of the AC is 'normative', a term associated with Roskilde Professor Ian Manners and used by him to describe and analyse the international identity of the EU. It is adopted here because, like the EU, the AC shapes the ideational direction of Arctic policy and what is considered to be 'normal' in Arctic relations (Manners, 2002, 2008). The AC lacks the legal reinforcement mechanisms that many other international and regional organisations have at their disposal. This arrangement ensures that states with different foreign-policy outlooks are able to come together and collaborate around a common set of objectives without compromising their national interests or legislative power.

However, as noted above, in May 2011 the Arctic Foreign Ministers nonetheless entered into a legally binding agreement on 'search and rescue efforts', which could be seen as their attempt to firm up their collective commitment to Arctic cooperation and governance (Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2011). The AC is nonetheless based on a much looser form of regional governance than, for example, the European Union, and questions of high politics do not figure on its policy agenda. As opposed to the EU, the AC member states do not conduct open debates on military security and have hitherto not demonstrated any willingness to commit themselves to multi-lateral cooperation in that field. It is nonetheless interesting to observe that the *Arctic Security Public Opinion Survey*, commissioned by the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation and the Canada Centre for Global Security Studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs (2011: 13-19), found that a surprisingly high number of randomly selected respondents in the eight Arctic states were in favour of military security and peace-building being included in the work of the AC. However, the Arctic states do not seem to wish to move in this direction, opting instead for policy co-operation in non-military areas.

Concluding remarks on the AC

In sum, the Arctic states have reached broad agreement on the significance of furthering global governance in the area of climate change and other policy fields, which suggests that it is premature to depict the Arctic as a region exclusively tainted by national interests narrowly defined. On the contrary, 'for the past decade the Arctic Council has proved to be an important forum for increased mutual understanding and cooperation in the circumpolar area and has provided a major contribution into the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic' (Arctic Foreign Ministers, 2006). Swedish scholar Rikard Bengtson (2011: 59) nonetheless goes as far as to argue that, although the AC is 'an all-inclusive' institution, it has a 'weak structure, which means that Arctic issues run an inherent risk of being caught in geopolitical logics applied by great powers, and cannot project attention to all the issues within its jurisdiction'. This is not the view of the current Chair of the AC, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, who recently stated that 'in the Arctic, we have now moved from accelerating confrontation to warm cooperation.' (Government Offices of Sweden, 2011: 1). As has been noted above, the power of the AC is normative and ideational rather than a matter of power politics and as such ensures the possibility of reaching a broad consensus on potentially difficult issues.

The Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)

The Nordic Council of Ministers is primarily an organisation for inter-Nordic cooperation, but the end of the Cold War and the reinvention of Nordic cooperation that followed led to a more globally aware NCM. Prior to the end of the Cold War the Nordic states had refrained from openly discussing issues of security and defence in NCM sessions, but opted for cooperation in other fields, including social and welfare policies. The Baltic States were at the centre of the NCM's immediate post-Cold War debate (Bergman 2002, 2006), but it is probably fair to say that the Arctic region has now been given equal status.

Policy commitments: the Arctic action plans

The NCM's Arctic Co-operation Programme was first launched in 1996 in an effort to promote a collective approach to the High North. It is hardly surprising that the Arctic should be one of the key areas of NCM cooperation, given the geographical position of the five Nordic states and Greenland. The key objectives of the 1996 programme (NCM, 1996) centred around improving the quality of life and the economic and infrastructural conditions of indigenous populations inhabiting the Arctic by promoting both different aspects of sustainable development and cooperation and collaborative arrangements between the Arctic states. As is the case for the

AC, the NCM recognises the significance of involving representatives of indigenous communities and political groups in the decision-making process by consulting them prior to making final decisions and inviting them to key meetings.

Since 2003 the NCM's Arctic Action Plans have been separated from its overall parallel policy to raise the profile of the Nordic states' commitment to the Arctic, consistent with their longstanding commitment to environmental sustainability and peace. The first action programme has been followed by three additional ones (NCM, 1996, 2003, 2006, 2009), indicating a long term commitment to the Arctic on the part of the Nordic States. Key here is the decision to increase the NCM's budgetary commitments to the Arctic from DKK 1 million in 1996 to approximately DKK 8 million in 2009 (NCM, 2009: 1).

The current 2009-2011 Arctic Action Programme focuses on a number of areas, including in brief improving the quality of life of the people living in the Arctic, combating climate change and related processes, preserving nature in the Arctic and promoting the sustainable extraction of national resources. There is also a continued commitment to the scientific work undertaken globally during the so-called International Polar Year. (NCM, 2009: 1) In line with its general outlook, the NCM retains a high commitment to the involvement of local and indigenous communities in relevant policies. For example, the 2009-2011 *Arctic Action Programme* was subjected to scrutiny by the Sami Parliament before it was adopted.

The NCM as intermediary

As is the case for the AC, the NCM focuses on security challenges of a non-military nature, as is consistent with the latter's historical role as a non-military actor. The low-tension pro-regional cooperation approach of the NCM places it well to function as an intermediary between institutions such as the Arctic Council and the European Union, and to promote Arctic integration on different levels of governance. As Airoidi (2009: 109) has recently observed, 'there is ... a foundation for an effort by the NCM to influence the shaping of the EU attitude towards the Arctic, including building stronger bridges with the Arctic neighbours.... At this stage the NCM's most important task might be to provide the EU with arguments ... on how to coherently substantiate its Arctic interest'. The NCM was also central to the foundation of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR), which seeks 'to promote deepened cooperation between the Arctic Governments for the benefit of the entire region' (Bohlin, cited in the NCM, 2010: 27).

It is not only within the NCM and at the parliamentary level that the Nordic states have committed themselves to the conduct of a common Arctic policy, but also at the ministerial level. The Nordic Foreign Ministers issued a joint declaration in June 2009, in which they argued that, ‘individually, the Nordic countries have limited capacity to solve the increasing number and practical issues regarding the environment, climate, safety and rescue in the Arctic. The ministers therefore decide to cooperate closely to promote the follow-up of specific issues addressed in the Arctic Council ... in relevant international bodies’. The Nordics are thus committed to using inter-Nordic cooperation as a platform for furthering specific Arctic concerns (*Nordiska Ministermötet* 2009).

Finally, it should be noted that the NCM has been granted permanent observer status in the Arctic Council, which is testament to both actors’ wish to lock their respective regional policies into a wider circumpolar framework to aim for consensus across regional institutions, as well as avoiding overlapping policies from taking shape.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)

The BEAC was established on 11 January 1993 to further regional cooperation in the Barents Region. The original members of the BEAC were Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, as well as the European Commission. They envisaged the BEAC as an important part of the overall ‘process of evolving European cooperation and integration, which has been given a new dimension with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe’, and argued ‘that such cooperation will contribute to international peace and security’ (BEAC, 1993: 1). The broad founding objectives of the BEAC were ‘bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, science and technology, tourism, the environment, infrastructure, educational and cultural exchange, as well as projects particularly aimed at improving the situation of indigenous peoples in the North’ (BEAC, 1993: 2). What is more, and in line with one of the recommendations that will be offered below, the BEAC stressed that it would not duplicate or replace ongoing work in other bilateral or multilateral fora, but will where appropriate seek to give impetus and coherence to regional cooperation and encourage new common efforts’ (p. 2).

A parallel development was the establishment of the Barents Regional Council (BRC) in 1993. The BRC shares the BEAC’s commitment to multilateral and bilateral cooperation and development in the Barents region. It brings together thirteen regional counties, as well as indigenous representatives from the member states (BRC, 2011: 1). It provides an important forum for cooperation between local and regio-

nal councillors, as well as representatives of indigenous communities (BRC, 2011), helping to foster multilevel governance in the Arctic North (BRC, 2011). In sum, the BRC promotes such things as sustainable development and peaceful relations across borders by involving local communities in key bottom-up decision-making processes and deliberations. As such the BRC complements the BEAC, in particular by acknowledging the ‘importance of local knowledge, the ability to identify the most urgent priorities and the capacity to carry out implementation in the Region’ (BRC, 2011: 1). It receives support from the Norwegian Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes, which was established in 1993 to assist the Norwegian chairmanship of the Barents Regional Council, but was later given permanence and financial support by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The BEAC celebrated its tenth anniversary on 11 January 2003 during the Swedish presidency. The celebratory meeting in Kirkenes was attended by the prime ministers of the Nordic states and Russia. The meeting was also attended by local representatives residing in the Barents region. The Kirkenes Declaration normatively commits the members of the BEAC to such things as sustainable development, social development and environmental protection, and co-operation between national customs, police and immigration authorities (BEAC, 2003: 1-2). In addition, a Barents Health and Social Programme was established in 2005, followed by a Barents HIV Programme in 2005 (Norwegian Barents Secretariat, no date), both of which demonstrate the efforts on the part of the BEAC states to pursue policies that have some relevance for the peoples of the region.

Norway held the chair from 2003 to 2005, with Finland taking over from 2005 to 2007 and the Russian Federation from 2007 to 2009, when Sweden took over again. The objectives of the BEAC remained very similar during these years, the emphasis being among other things on sustainable economic and social development plus environmental protection (BEAC, 2009, 2007, 2005). It should be noted here that Russia started its chairmanship by announcing that it would set aside 120 million Euros for the purpose of furthering cross-border cooperation with the western members of the BEAC (*Barents Observer*, 15 November 2007a), which was an important gesture of dedication to the Barents region.

The current objectives of the Swedish chairmanship

The objectives of the Swedish chairmanship of the BEAC (2009-2011) include ‘strengthening cooperation to meet the interlinked challenges of economic growth, climate change and sustainable use of natural resources’, as well as promoting health,

social and youth issues, among other things (Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2009: 3). Here it is interesting to observe that Sweden envisaged its presidency of the EU in 2009 as a way of promoting issues directly linked to the Barents region (*Norr-bottenskuriren*, 19 October 2009), thus adding to the interconnectedness between the BEAC and the EU. The Swedish efforts to use its EU presidency to highlight the Barents region is consistent with the general direction of the BEAC: in November 2007 the foreign ministers of the BEAC announced their wish to make the Barents region a priority area of the European Union. For example, in an interview with the *Barents Observer*, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre supported the idea of more closely involving the EU in the work of the BEAC, but also warned against merging regional cooperative initiatives and frameworks too much (cited in *Barents Observer* 2007b).

Among the BEAC cooperation and dialogue takes place within the framework of the Parliamentary Barents Conferences, which assembles parliamentarians and representatives from subnational parliaments throughout the Barents region. The Nordic Council and the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conferences are both invited to these transnational parliamentary deliberations. The most recent meeting was held in Luleå in the north of Sweden on 20 May 2011, where parliamentarians from Norway, Russia and Sweden, as well as representatives from subnational parliaments, the Nordic Council and the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, gathered to discuss pressing developments. Together they adopted a resolution that reaffirmed their support for 'environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth, Industry and Commerce ... Indigenous Entrepreneurship, and Infrastructural Development' (Fifth Parliamentary Barents Conference, 2011: 1). They also recognised the necessity of retaining 'existing structures provided by the Barents Cooperation on national and regional levels in order to develop common assets and resources and to address common challenges in the region' as well as to 'further improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural situation of the peoples inhabiting the region, including in particular support to the efforts of the indigenous peoples of the region' (*ibid.*: 2).

Alone the BEAC may not be able to contribute to a wholesale transformation of the High North, but together with the other Arctic institutional initiatives it has an important role to play, not the least by inspiring dialogue across national parliamentary systems and involving indigenous representatives in such deliberations. The BEAC continually stresses the significance of multilevel cooperation and governance:

The Council expresses its support for deepened cooperation on various levels: intergovernmental, regional, among the indigenous peoples, and direct business, municipal and people to people cooperation. The Council underlines that work at local and regional levels is fundamental to the success of the Barents cooperation, emphasizes the key role played by the Barents Regional Council. (BEAC 2005: 1)

What is more, the emphasis on economic growth, industry and commerce, coupled with human health and social development, reveals a commitment to the welfare of the peoples actually residing in the Barents region, which lends credence to the bottom-up approach of the BEAC.

The Northern Dimension and the EU's emergent Arctic Policy

The Northern Dimension of the EU has frequently been described as a distinctively Finnish EU project because it was launched during Finland's presidency of the EU in 1997. One of the initial objectives of the ND was to provide a framework for dialogue between the Nordic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Russia and the EU. The Northern Dimension is, of course, not a distinct Arctic initiative but has an Arctic dimension attached to it. Palosaari and Möller (2003: 255) argue that the ND, together with the US Northern Europe Initiative, were central in preventing the Arctic region from being marginalised in the post-Cold War era. The ND is connected with several other regional groupings such as such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the BEAC, the AC and the NCM. As in the case of these institutions, the ND promotes cross-border cooperation in the areas of environmental protection, trade cooperation, the fight against organised crime, drugs and human trafficking, and illegal immigration. The ethos underpinning the Northern Dimension is thus the identification of shared regional problems and finding solutions to these through multilateral cooperation.

The New Northern Dimension

The new Northern Dimension was adopted at the Northern Dimension Summit in Helsinki on 24 November 2006. The 'Political Declaration on the Northern Dimension Policy' defines the 'European Arctic and the Sub-Arctic', including Greenland, as significant parts of its policy range (the European Union, the Republic of Iceland, the Kingdom of Norway, and the Russian Federation, 2006: 1). The ND openly states that the sector of 'freedom, security and justice' is a priority, and to that effect the ND seeks to promote international cooperation in the fields of 'border management, judicial cooperation in criminal and civil matters, fight against organised

crime, trafficking in human beings and ... cross border crime' (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2009: 17). The commitment to furthering integration in these non-traditional soft security fields sets the ND apart from the AC and NCM, both of which place the key emphasis on such things as climate change and the situation of indigenous communities, rather than organised crime and border management, among other things.

At the ND Summit in 2006 it was decided that the ND should continue to function as a channel through which actors can support cross-border dialogue and promote economic cooperation and integration, sustainable development and competitiveness in the north of Europe. Furthermore, and in line with the policies of other regional institutions, the ND will be used as a way of facilitating people-to-people contacts across borders, all of which are key to the Arctic area. In October 2008 the first Ministerial meeting of the new ND was held in Saint Petersburg. In a joint declaration, the ministers expressed their support for the 'considerable intensification of the Northern Dimension policy and growing interest towards it from local and regional authorities, IFIs, the business community, NGOs and other organizations of the civil society' (Foreign Ministers of the Northern Dimension, 2008: 1). The ministers expressed their satisfaction with the level of cooperation between the Northern Dimension and the four regional councils in the north: the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) and the Arctic Council (AC). Airoidi (2008: 22) nonetheless argues that the circumpolar dimension of the new ND is underdeveloped and that it is 'avowedly first and foremost a regional aspect of EU/Russia policy.' In part this has been remedied by the emergent Arctic Policy of the EU, which has given the Union a distinct Arctic profile, which will be discussed next.

The EU's emergent Arctic Policy

The European Commission has moved closer to the adoption of a distinct European Arctic Policy as a way of enforcing its commitment to the Circumpolar North and to 'Arctic Governance' (European Parliament, 2008). It is hard to see how the EU could have refrained from doing so considering the media attention given to the Arctic and the emphasis on environmental security within regional and international institutions generally. In line with the EU's enhanced interest in Arctic governance and cooperation, in 2008 the European Parliament (2008) proposed that 'the Commission should be prepared to pursue the opening of international negotiations designed to lead to the adoption of an international treaty for the protection of the Arctic, having as its inspiration the Antarctic Treaty', which has not as yet happened. Even though such a

step might seem remote at the present time, it does reveal a great deal of commitment on the part of the European Parliament to the sustainability and prosperity of the Arctic region. None of the EU institutions can afford to be seen as passive observers of developments in the northernmost part of Europe and beyond.

In 2008 the European Commission adopted 'the European Union and the Arctic Region' communiqué as a way of recognising the urgency of the Arctic region and its distinct problems (European Commission, 2008a). That same year a former European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, expressed her support for an active EU arctic policy:

The Arctic is a unique and vulnerable region located in the immediate vicinity of Europe. Its evolution will have significant repercussions on the life of Europeans for generations to come. Enhancing the European Union's contribution to Arctic cooperation will open new perspectives in our relations with the Arctic states. The EU is ready to work with them to increase stability, to enhance Arctic multilateral governance ... as well as to keep the right balance between the priority goal of preserving the environment and the need for sustainable use of natural resources. (Ferrero-Waldner, cited in European Union, 2008: 1)

Ferrero-Waldner's speech indicates a strong sense of commitment to the Arctic, as well as acknowledging its importance for the European environment. Similarly, Joe Borg, the former European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, has argued that

We cannot remain impassive in the face of the alarming developments affecting the Arctic climate and, in consequence, the rest of our planet.... As many EU policies in the areas such as climate change, environment, energy, research, fisheries and transport have a direct impact on the Arctic, a coordinated action is needed and the Integrated Maritime Policy can provide a much needed collaborative platform. (European Commission, 2009: 1)

Borg was careful to point out that the Arctic is not simply a European concern but has wider implications for the global environment. At the Arctic Transform Conference held in Brussels in March 2009, the message of the European Commission was even stronger: 'the Arctic region is under threat as never before. Like the canary in the coal mine it is sending us a clear signal about the dangers which lie ahead. Scientific

evidence shows that climate change is much faster in the Arctic than in the rest of the world' (Benita Ferrero-Waldner, 2009: 1). To deal with these very pressing security issues and to prevent a future environmental disaster, the European Union has outlined a set of policy objectives:

- Protecting and preserving the Arctic in unison with its population;
- Promoting sustainable use of resources;
- Contributing to enhanced Arctic multilateral governance. (EU, 2011: 1)

Against the backdrop of these overarching goals, the EU has singled out a number of concrete policy areas, including the unique situations of indigenous and local communities, research, fisheries, transport, tourism and governance. For example, the European Commission (2008b: 1) is pushing for a new fishing regime in the Arctic:

In order to preserve the Arctic region and its environmental heritage, internationally agreed governance structures and effective implementation of agreed rules are of the utmost importance. No country or group of countries have sovereignty over the North Pole or the Arctic Ocean around it. As there is no specific treaty regime for the Arctic, the European Commission favours promoting a cooperative Arctic governance system based on the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In addition, the International Maritime Organisation has an important role to play with respect to international navigation in the Arctic.

The commitment to the Arctic region was echoed in the EU Council Declaration on Arctic Issues adopted in 2009, which affirmed the Union's support for 'an EU policy on Arctic issues' based upon, among other things, 'reinforced multilateral governance ... the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea', as well as the formulation and implementation of 'EU actions and policies that impact upon the Arctic' (Council of the European Union, 2009: 1). To strengthen further the Union's commitment to the Arctic, the former has initiated work on an 'EU Arctic Footprint and Policy Assessment Project (EU Arctic Footprint)', which aims at 'calculating Europe's contribution to the impact on the Arctic environment and inhabitants' and the 'effectiveness of EU policies in mitigating Arctic impacts' (European Commission 2011: 1). It is hoped that the project will 'improve the effectiveness of EU environmental policies with respect to the Arctic region' and be constitutive in the development of a new Arctic Policy more broadly (ibid.). The European Commission's

commitment to the Arctic is shared by the European Parliament (2010: 1), which adopted a motion for a European Parliament Resolution in 2009, which committed the Union to the protection of the Arctic environment and to ‘overall stability and peace in the region’, as well as making sure that the specific interests of the indigenous people are considered. These values are consistent with the values underpinning the Arctic institutions and as such could provide the basis for fruitful cooperation between the EU and the Arctic institutions if used effectively.

The importance of ensuring that the EU is directly involved in the Arctic cannot be overestimated, particularly in areas such as fisheries and environmental policies, given the Union’s longstanding experiences in these fields. More broadly, through its projection of normative power (Manners 2002), the Union can make a positive ideational impact upon Arctic policy developments. In sum, the EU has the normative power, financial means and multilateral resources at its disposal to make a real difference in the Circumpolar North. If used wisely, these can stimulate a fruitful dialogue between the EU Arctic states and non-EU actors such as Russia, the USA and Canada and as such bring a sense of real multilateralism to Arctic cooperation. This could also add to the EU’s recent attempts to solidify its relationship with the Russian Federation. The European Union will publish a progress report in mid-2011 in which it will evaluate the benefits of firming up the EU’s Arctic policy so as to make it more formal and grounded in the EU’s decision-making machinery (Airoldi, 2010).

Key challenges to Arctic cooperation: three observations

So far we have seen that the Arctic is situated within a number of formal and informal institutional arrangements. Together these make up its governance structure. Circumpolar Europe is probably one of the most heavily institutionalised parts of the international community, at least if one also takes account of all the informal and often localised projects that have emerged alongside those of the AC and the NCM and the enhanced role of the EU in the region. Such bottom-up activities can help to legitimise the institutionalisation of the Arctic by rooting the new forms of regionalism within local and indigenous communities.

Three observations should be made here. First, it is important to ensure that the high level of institutionalisation in the Arctic does not lead to overlapping policies that are detrimental to efficiency and coherence. As has been demonstrated above, the policy objectives of the institutions at work in the Circumpolar North are quite similar, which could lead to overlapping policy initiatives and implementation processes, though this does not have to be the case.

A comparison can be made with the European Union here: its foreign and security policies have historically and politically suffered from incoherence caused by the lack of a common identity, clearly defined policies and specifically European interests, identity and institutions (Peterson, 1998: 3). By continuously reforming the decision-making procedures and structures of the Union and working towards the construction of a pan-European identity that is more than its constitutive parts (Erskine, 2008), the EU has sought to deal with this criticism. This is a lesson worth considering in the Arctic context, in particular since successful regional integration across borders is dependent on collective identities and policy commitments across communities and borders. Furthermore, the institutional interconnectedness of the High North needs to operate on the basis of transparency and accountability so as to prevent closed networks from emerging, in particular since these often are impenetrable and hard to survey, which is an argument that has been presented above.

Secondly, it is significant that the Arctic institutions continue to recognise the importance of involving indigenous and local communities in deliberations and concrete policy initiatives to ensure that the latter are supported at the grassroots level. Again, this is key to the construction of a shared sense of community and identity across national borders and as such helps to prevent the Circumpolar North from turning into a hotspot for inter-state conflict. It is, in other words, a peace strategy in its own right. What is more, any attempt to transform the Arctic into a region of sustainable growth requires the support of local and indigenous communities.

The third observation made here is that, although there is broad agreement on the most significant challenges to security in the Circumpolar North, many of which can be linked to climate change, there is a clear avoidance of debates on military security issues. However, avoiding dialogue on certain aspects of military security does not necessarily produce a more stable strategic environment. New identities and loyalties come about through transnational dialogue, at least if the participants are committed to open and democratic discussions that involve many different actors. Arguing from perspective of power politics, Borgeson (2008: 4) has observed that 'the Arctic Council does exist to address environmental issues, but it has remained silent on the most pressing challenges facing the region because the United States deliberately emasculated it at birth, in 1996, by prohibiting it from addressing security concerns.' Such discussions take place bilaterally in less institutionalised milieus, but never within the Arctic Council. Simply avoiding talking about difficult developments in power politics might not be the best approach to the Arctic peace project. Talking about military security does not in itself produce negative outcomes. This is not to argue

for the militarisation or securitisation of the Arctic Council, but rather to suggest that multi-layered dialogue between partner states is central to conflict prevention. The Arctic states could thus make better use of various multilateral frameworks to inspire dialogue across borders, in so doing opening up discussions regarding possible routes to collective security and non-proliferation.

PART TWO. Arctic security, climate change and sovereignty

What follows below is a concise discussion of a select number of security developments that are worth exploring in the context of the Arctic region, with emphasis upon such things as climate change and sovereignty claims, which are closely connected in the High North.

A few introductory remarks on Arctic security

Since the early 1990s, the Arctic has experienced the positive effects of the processes of demilitarisation, global governance and institutionalisation which replaced the hostilities of the Cold-War era. Palosaari and Möller (2003: 255) nonetheless argue that ‘the Arctic story is one of marginality, centrality, securitisation and desecuritisation, militarisation and demilitarisation’ all taking place simultaneously. They maintain that militarisation remains a key concept in the Arctic even though the majority of security challenges to the region are of a non-military character. Despite the widespread institutionalisation of the Arctic, the region has not entirely escaped geopolitical tensions emerging from, for example, the competition for natural resources and sovereignty claims. There are also some signs that the Arctic coastal states are exploring ways of enhancing their military presence in the circumpolar north. Russia, for example, will be positioning an Arctic brigade on the Kola peninsula to protect its oil and gas interests in the region (*The Daily Telegraph*, 31 March 2011). It has also reached an agreement with the multinational British Petroleum to start drilling for oil in the Arctic. The connection between climate change and attempts to extend sovereignty is at the heart of Arctic security debates. This relationship forms the basis of the discussion below, and there is an attempt to refute the common position put forward by some that the Arctic is a potentially perilous conflict zone riddled by *Realpolitik* rather than global governance and cooperation, as has been suggested above.

Climate Change and the Arctic

The majority of the world’s leading politicians, policy-makers and scientists are now convinced that changes in the expected weather patterns of the globe are anthropogenic (i.e. man-made) causing rising sea levels, melting ice and glaciers, and threats

to flora and fauna, as well as to the livelihoods of indigenous communities. In very simple terms climate change is caused by such activities as the burning of fossil fuels and the clearing of land, which lead to higher levels of carbon dioxide, methane and greenhouse gases that pollute the atmosphere. The Arctic is one of the areas most affected by climate change, if not *the* most affected. It is estimated that the ice covering the Arctic Ocean has been reduced by half in the past fifty years, with important implications for the environment and the populations of the Circumpolar North. The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Report (2004: 8), commissioned by the UN, argues that 'climate changes are being experienced particularly intensely in the Arctic. Arctic average temperature has risen at almost twice the rate as the rest of the world' and 'melting glaciers and sea ice and rising permafrost temperatures' are key to these warming effects. In addition the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) has testified that:

the rate of ice loss from Greenland is increasing ... in the Arctic, during the summers of 2007 and 2008, the minimum extent of year-round sea ice decreased to its lowest level since satellite records began 30 years ago. International Polar Year expeditions recorded an unprecedented rate of sea-ice drift in the Arctic as well. Due to global warming, the types and extent of vegetation in the Arctic shifted, affecting grazing animals. (WMO, State of Polar Research Press Release, 2009)

Climate change is strongly linked with 'the new scramble for territory and resources among the five Arctic powers' (Borgerson, 2008: 63), leading some newspapers to depict the Arctic as a potential hotspot for increased tensions and possible conflicts (see, for example, *Politiken* 15 July 2009; *the Guardian* 13 May 2009; *Rusnet* 31 March 2009; *Reuters UK* 13 May 2009; *Barents Observer* 29 March 2009c; *New York Times* 28 March 2009; *Daily Telegraph* 14 August 2007). This should be seen against the backdrop of the vast unclaimed oil and gas resources yet to be discovered in the Arctic. As the US Geological Survey (2008: 1) has estimated, 'the extensive Arctic continental shelves may constitute the geographically largest unexplored prospective area for petroleum remaining on Earth.' In addition, climate change has led to the emergence of new and until recently inaccessible sea routes opening up new patterns of trade and international commerce, as well as competition for them. Recently two commercial vessels belonging to the German Beluga shipping company successfully completed the Northeast Passage from Asia to the West, demonstrating the reality of new sea routes emerging. From a Russian perspective this means the possibility of utilising the passage 'as a reliable shipping route' – a

route that is considerably shorter than those in the Southern Hemisphere (*New York Times*, 11 September 2009).

Climate change has also led to greater availability of certain fish stocks, including cod and herring, while freshwater fish are likely to decline (Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, 2004: 17). However, there is also evidence to suggest that a warmer climate will lead to 'agricultural opportunities' brought about by 'a longer and warmer growing season' (ibid.). The economic advantages of such discoveries could impede upon international efforts to fight climate change because some people will benefit from the increased availability of fish stocks. What follows below is a brief account of the relationship between climate change and issues related to claims to sovereignty in the Arctic.

Climate change and sovereignty

Climate change has not only been depicted as the source of economic problems and opportunities but has been defined by some as a potential catalyst for a Cold War-like remilitarisation of the Arctic. Borgerson (2008: 65) is at the forefront of this debate, and his message is rather bleak: he defines the Arctic as a 'coming anarchy' and thus advocates a realist-inspired analysis of the far north. He contends that the supposedly anarchic situation in the Arctic can be explained by the absence of an international treaty that 'guarantees an orderly and collective approach to extracting the region's wealth' (Borgerson 2008: 67). However, Coalter G. Lathrop (2008) argues that Borgerson is wrong in depicting the Arctic as a lawless region because it is 'a region governed by international law ... specifically by the international law of the sea.' According to the Swedish defence analyst Niklas Granholm (2009: 20) there is growing opposition to the 'alarmist' narratives favoured by Borgerson, particularly in Denmark.

The Arctic is nonetheless faced with many challenges, including issues relating to air surveillance, sea security and the prevention of international organised crime, all of which top international summits and agendas (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2009). Furthermore, the five Arctic coastal states have sought to extend their continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean in an effort to lay claim to the natural reserves that might be discovered either above or below the seabed, which is a security issue that will be discussed below.

There are, of course, differing viewpoints as to the severity of such security challenges. The media tend to emphasize, or some might say overemphasize,

territorial disputes between the Arctic states by portraying their actions in old-style realist language (see, for example, *Politiken* 15 July 2009, *The Guardian* 13 May 2009; *Rusnet* 31 March 2009; *Reuters UK* 13 May 2009; *Barents Observer* 29 March 2009c; *New York Times* 28 March 2009; *Daily Telegraph* 14 August 2007). A rather typical media representation reads as follows: ‘Russia, the United States, Canada, Denmark and Norway are all locked in a race to grab a slice of the northern wilderness after US researchers predicted that global warming might leave the area ice-free, and therefore more easily navigable and explored, as early as 2030’ (*The Daily Telegraph* 31 March 2011). *The Economist* (8 October 2009), on the other hand, points out that, although ‘military types mention the possibility – though not the likelihood – of a new sort of cold war’, this is not an inevitable development.

The five states that are at the centre of most Arctic debates are Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the USA, all of which are coastal states with significant security, energy and sovereign interests in the Circumpolar North. In 2008 the Danish Defence Commission (Ministry of Defence 2009: 78) observed that the Arctic coastal states have ‘already started to position themselves’ in relation to one another to secure their national interests. Despite having geographical possessions, Finland, Iceland and Sweden have not been involved in this power political game, which can be explained by their lack of Arctic coastal borders. What follows below is a brief summary of some of the territorial security dilemmas currently facing the Arctic and how they broadly relate to climate change. The focus is on the five Arctic coastal states, starting with Russia’s strategic interests in the Arctic.

Russia

Russia is generally viewed as a key actor in the Arctic, particularly when it comes to claims to sovereignty. It is instructive to analyse briefly some key events in Russian foreign policy to gain an insight into the overall security situation in the Arctic. In 2007 Russia planted its nation’s titanium flag on the Arctic seabed in 2007 as way of staking out its claim to resources in the Arctic, an action that international media outlets have at times used to illustrate the geopolitical situation in the Circumpolar North. The relevance of the act is mainly symbolic, but was nonetheless perceived as provocative by the other Arctic nations. In March 2009 Russia revealed its plans to deploy a dedicated military force to patrol the Arctic and safeguard its interests in the area. Russian border guards are also expected to take part in such exercises (*The Guardian*, 28 March 2009).

This was followed by the release of a new security strategy entitled 'Principles for Russian Politics in the Arctic in the period to 2020...', in which the country warned that the vast oil and gas resources in the Arctic could lead to conflicts and that 'military force cannot be ruled out' (cited in *The Times*, May 14 2009a). The chief foreign commentator of *The Times*, Bronwen Maddox, has described this turn of events as a 'stunt' designed to make other states 'tremble and surrender their claims', and she rightly observes that 'to talk of war is to ignore the vast legal effort under way to settle just those questions' (*The Times*, May 14, 2009b). The language used by the journalist in question to describe Russian foreign policy in the Circumpolar North is perhaps somewhat exaggerated in that there is also evidence to suggest that Russia is, like its Arctic neighbours, attempting to make a positive contribution to Arctic developments. An instructive example here is Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's statement at the 2009 AC meeting in Tromsø, that 'We ... are not planning to increase our military presence in the Arctic and to deploy armed forces there' (*Ria Novosti*, 24 April 2009).

A year later, in 2010, Russia and Norway managed to settle their differences with regard to their respective geographical and natural reserve claims in the Barents Sea (*New York Times* 27 April 2010). Moreover, Prime Minister Putin announced that 'it is imperative to keep the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation' and that international disputes can be resolved by the application of international law (cited in *Deutsche Welle* 23 September 2010). This has nonetheless not prevented Russia from creating an Arctic brigade for the purpose of defending its natural reserves in the High North. The brigade is expected to be fully operational in 2011 (*The Daily Telegraph*, 31 March 2011).

The Kremlin has also claimed ownership of the Lomonosov Ridge, an underwater ridge that runs for 1800 km across the Arctic Ocean. In 2010, in an effort to convince the United Nations that Russia is the rightful owner of a large proportion of the Lomonosov Ridge, the country sent a research vessel called Akademik Fedorov to the Arctic to collect scientific data to prove its claims to the continental shelf. It is expected that Russia will submit an application to the UN Commission for the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) in 2012 to extend its continental shelf to include a large proportion of the Lomonosov Ridge and the natural reserves within that area. The situation has been further complicated by Canada making similar claims to the Lomonosov Ridge. However, in 2010 the two countries agreed that the UN should settle their dispute over the 'resource-rich underwater Arctic

mountain range ... Lomonosov Ridge' (*BBC News* 16 September 2010). As will be discussed below, Denmark and Norway are also seeking to extend their part of the Lomonosov Ridge.

A final point here is that, although Russia is seeking to extend its sovereign territory, it is unlikely that it would instigate a conflict in the Arctic, since this would impede upon its future trade and commercial interests by making the circumpolar north an unstable region.

Map 2. The Lomonosov Ridge



<http://www.russiablog.org/lomonosov-ridge-map.jpg>

The USA

Shortly before leaving office, President George W. Bush identified a set of American national security and homeland security interests that could be affected by future developments in the Arctic. The official position of the Bush administration was that ‘human activity in the Arctic region is increasing and is projected to increase further ... This requires the United States to assert a more active and influential national presence to protect its Arctic interests to project sea power throughout the region’ (Security Presidential Directive and Homeland Security Directive, 2009: 2). Bush thus steered the US towards a potentially more muscular Arctic policy, in particular if its national interests were to be challenged. The strategic interests that were given priority in Bush’s Security Directive included ‘missile defence and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations; and ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight’ as well as ‘fundamental homeland security interests in preventing terrorist attacks and mitigating those criminal or hostile acts that could increase the United States’ vulnerability to terrorism in the Arctic region’ (ibid.).

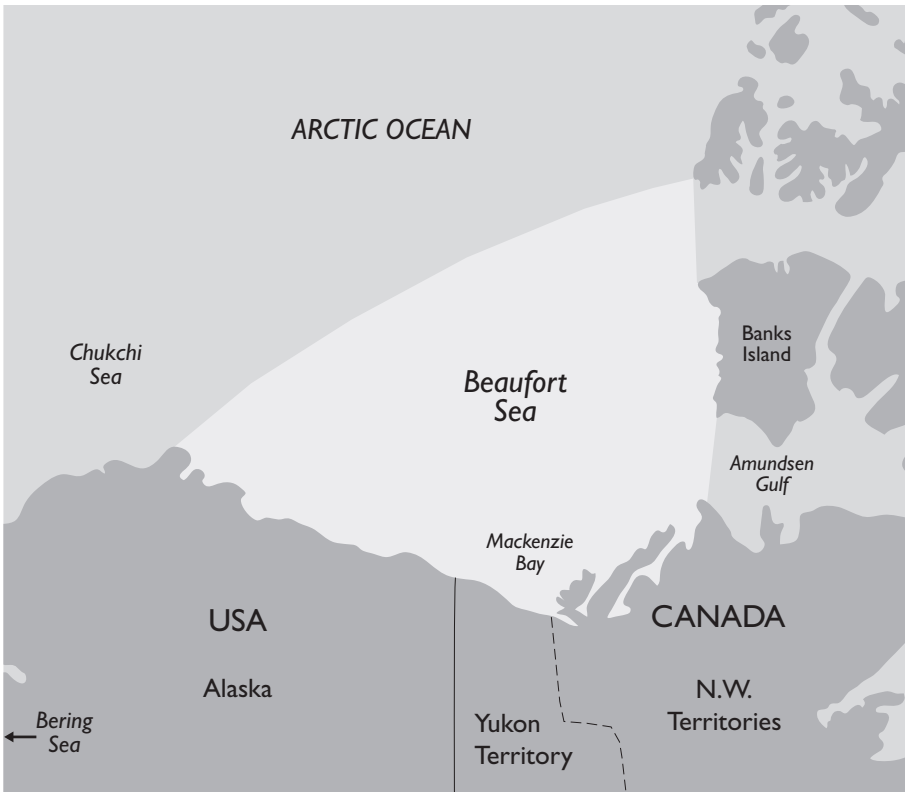
The Bush regime thus called for a range of military measures to meet the challenges of the Arctic area. However, such things as environmental protection and the conservation of natural resources were also given attention. The document underlines the centrality of both ‘international organisations and bilateral contacts’ in dealing with US interests in the Arctic and as such opts for an approach that is not solely based upon bilateralism. In line with this position, the Bush administration committed the USA to signing the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to safeguard US national interests by ensuring ‘US mobility of our Armed Forces worldwide’ (2009: 3).

In 2009, one of the key authors of the US security directive, David A. Balton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State, told an audience at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace that the Obama administration would be likely to stick to the Bush security directive. In his judgement the USA should go ahead and ratify the Law of the Sea Convention. He also argued that cooperation with regard to Arctic matters is fully feasible between the USA and Russia. This line of thought is supported by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who has stated that the US will implement its Arctic policy on the basis of international cooperation (*Barents Observer*, 2009b). The US has hitherto not ratified the Law of the Sea Convention.

The US security directive of 2009 was criticised by Canadian newspapers, which objected to what they saw as attempt to assert US national interests in the Arctic. *The Calgary Herald* (31 January 2009), for example, defined Bush's policy as 'another forceful rebuttal of Canada's claims of sovereignty over the Northwest Passage' and argued that it served to undermine 'Canada's claim of sovereignty over what is emerging as a major global shipping route because of the shrinking polar ice cap'.

Since the 1970s, Canada and the USA have diverged on how to carve up the Beaufort Sea, which is situated off the coasts of Alaska and the Yukon (see Map 3 below). The situation has been complicated by the potentially rich natural reserves yet to be explored in the Beaufort Sea. The dispute led the former Secretary General of NATO, de Hoop Scheffer (2009: 1), to criticise NATO's Arctic members for their military activities in the Circumpolar North. He described them as a direct

Map 3. The Beaufort Sea



<http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/infopage/beaufortsea.htm>

response to 'the changing environment' in the Arctic and argued that, 'although the long-term implications of climate change and the retreating ice cap in the Arctic are still unclear, what is very clear is that the High North is going to require even more of the Alliance's attention in the coming years.' Some efforts have been made on the part of both governments to settle the dispute in a neighbourly manner, with the former Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lawrence Cannon, being particularly keen to come to some form of agreement through bilateral dialogue (Cannon, 2009; Menasborders 2010).

One of the key challenges of the Obama regime has been whether to allow new forms of coastal natural gas and oil drilling in US offshore areas. After initial scepticism about such drilling, the Obama administration decided to allow it in certain areas, but to protect Bristol Bay in Alaska from new kinds of exploration. However, the Beaufort Sea could be subjected to drilling, which might add force to the energy race in the Arctic. Barack Obama himself justified his decision by arguing that:

this announcement is part of a broader strategy that will move us from an economy that runs on fossil fuels and foreign oil to one that relies more on homegrown fuels and clean energy. And the only way this transition will succeed is if it strengthens our economy in the short term and long term. To fail to recognize this reality would be a mistake. (Obama cited in *Market News* 2010)

Rather surprisingly, the National Security Strategy, a sixty-page long report, only contains the following paragraph on the Arctic, which appears at the very end of the document. In the words of the White House, 'the United States is an Arctic Nation with broad and fundamental interests in the Arctic region, where we seek to meet our national security needs, protect the environment, responsibly manage resources, account for indigenous communities, support scientific research, and strengthen international cooperation on a wide range of issues' (The White House 2010: 50). As emerges here the key objectives of American foreign policy in the High North are quite similar in character to the stated objectives of many of institutions that we have examined above.

Canada

So far Canada's disagreements with the USA and Russia have been discussed in the context of the other two countries' Arctic policies. Below, Canada's dispute

with Denmark regarding the small Hans island will be covered. It is nonetheless worth mentioning that Canada has been party to some verbal disputes with Russia. For example, in 2009 the Canadian government criticised Russia for flying bombers too close to Canada's Arctic airspace (*Calgary Herald*, 31 March 2009). The Russian Defence Minister, Anatoliy Serdyukov, responded by saying that Canada's harsh tone in relation to Russia 'is weakening the good relationship between our two countries by demonising Russia' (ibid.) It should be noted that the Canadian government has declared its own intention to establish a military base in the Northwest Passage area as a way of enhancing its military presence in the Arctic. In the words of the former Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lawrence Cannon (2009: 5):

Activity in the Arctic lands and waters is increasing, and so has our capacity in the North. Our first duty as Canada's national government is to exercise, responsibly, Canada's sovereignty in this region ... to further demonstrate Canada's sovereignty in the North, and progress on these initiatives is well underway: the establishment of a Canadian Forces Arctic Training Center in Resolute Bay; the expansion, currently underway, of the size and capabilities of the Canadian Rangers; and the development of a deepwater Arctic docking and refuelling facility in Nanosivik.

At the launch of Canada's *Arctic Foreign Policy* in August 2010, Cannon's message was somewhat less focused on hard security developments and more on Canada's Arctic identity and support for multilateralism and global governance (Cannon, 2010: 1-3). A key idea developed by Cannon is that the Canadian 'exercise' of sovereignty in the Arctic should be combined with 'good governance' (2010: 2). Moreover, the AC and indigenous communities are viewed as central elements in the 'shaping' of 'Canadian foreign policy on Arctic issues' (2010: 3). In sum, Canadian Arctic policy is shaped by a dual commitment to national sovereignty and global concerns regarding the future prosperity and sustainability of the High North.

Norway

'The High North' is one of the key priorities of Norway's security policy, which is hardly surprising considering the country's geographical position and vast oil and natural gas reserves. The Norwegian government has identified a strong link between climate change and 'opportunities to exploit formerly inaccessible resources' but warns against extracting such reserves without caution and scientific expertise (Gahr Støre,

2009: 2). The former Norwegian Minister of Defence, Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen (2009: 4-5), has argued that these can only be resolved through 'solid international cooperation and commitment'. She identified a set of key challenges to security in the High North, including 'conflicts of interest' that could lead to instability in that region, Russian strategic developments, 'the Northern Fleet's continued role in the Russian nuclear triad and the sheer weight of the Kola military infrastructure', all of which 'are of vital strategic importance to Russia' (ibid). Furthermore she shed light on the fact that 'the Barents Sea continues to be a training ground for military forces and a test bed for new weapon systems' (ibid.). However, as we have seen above and will note again below, Norway and Russia have managed to reach agreement on their differences over the Barents Sea, which may make some of Norway's concerns regarding Russian behaviour abroad redundant.

From a Norwegian perspective, it is crucial that NATO be used as provider of stability in the Arctic area and that there is a good relationship between the former and other 'organisations like the Arctic Council, the UN, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the EU' (ibid.). Furthermore, the official government position is that specific challenges facing the Arctic should be dealt with through extensive multilateral cooperation and dialogue across borders, as well as a recognition that the Arctic is a 'multicultural and multiethnic mosaic' (Gahr Støre, 2009: 4).

In 2007 the UN approved Norway's application to the UN Commission for the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to extend its continental shelf by 235,000 square kilometres from its coast and more importantly giving it a right to claim the natural resources within that area. This was a ground-breaking victory for Norway, and has been noted above, in 2010 Russia and Norway found a solution to their disagreement over the Barents Sea by deciding to divide the Sea into 'clear economic zones extending to the edge of Europe's northern continental shelf', thus opening up for new forms of oil and natural gas exploration (*New York Times* 27 April 2010). In the words of the Norwegian Prime Minister, Jens Stoltenberg, 'this is a confirmation that Norway and Russia, two large polar nations, do not have a policy about racing, but a policy about cooperation' (*New York Times* 27 April 2010), which sustains the argument developed here that the Arctic is in the main a story about cooperation rather than conflict. The decision by the Norwegian and Russian foreign ministers to publish a joint article sustains this claim further. They argue that 'the Arctic can be used to demonstrate just how much peace and collective interests can be served through the implementation of the international rule of law' (cited in *The Independent*, 23 September 2010).

Denmark

Denmark's Arctic policy will be addressed below at some length, so this section of the report will only address a set of issues in relation to sovereign developments. The draft version of the forthcoming document, 'Denmark's Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020', which was officially launched on the 24th of August 2011, states that Denmark will approach its sovereign claims in a cooperative and legal fashion (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011b: 13). The strategy also confirms Denmark's intention to submit an application to the CLCS in 2012 to extend its continental shelf to include five specific areas, all situated around Greenland and the Faroe Islands, including part of the North Pole itself (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011b: 14).

In 2007 a group of Danish scientists set off on an Arctic expedition to gather evidence that would support the claim that the 1,200-mile long Lomonosov Ridge is part of the Greenland territory. Hence, 'Danish scientists hope to prove through hi-tech measurements that Greenland's continental socket is attached to a huge ridge beneath the floating Arctic ice, the Associated Press reports' (*BBC NEWS* 5 October 2004a). The Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation has launched a continental shelf project aiming at gathering, interpreting and documenting data that will constitute the basis for Denmark's CLCS application (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011b: 14). In the words of the *Associated Press*, 'Denmark plans to lay claim to parts of the North Pole and other areas in the Arctic, where melting ice is uncovering new shipping routes, fishing grounds and drilling opportunities for oil and gas' (Associated Press, cited in *New York Times*, 17 May 2011). The Danish government has confirmed the accuracy of this information with Foreign Minister Lene Espersen expressing support for the forthcoming application to the UN, which is also a position shared by the former Social Democratic Foreign Minister, Mogens Lykketoft (*Information* 17 May 2011). In short, the majority view would seem to be that Denmark should exercise its sovereign rights in the Arctic (*ibid.*). However, the Greenlandic Premier, Kuupik Kleist, is reportedly more sceptical, his personal view being that the North Pole does not belong to any given state, but to humanity at large, which is a somewhat different view from the more dominant one (*ibid.*).

Finally, Denmark has an outstanding disagreement with Canada with regard to Hans Island, a small unpopulated island of 1.3 square metres located between Greenland and the Ellesmere Islands of Canada. Denmark has planted its national flag on Hans Island to claim this territory. The dispute remains unresolved, although relations be-

tween Denmark and Canada are solid in other respects (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011b: 15)

The Ilulissat Declaration

So far the sovereign claims of the five coastal states have been outlined. Here I shall briefly examine the efforts on the part of the five to find a resolution to their disagreements through the application of international law. In May 2008 an Arctic Ocean Conference in Ilulissat was organised by the Danish Foreign Minister and the Greenlandic Premier, to which the other four Arctic coastal states were invited, while the non-coastal states, Finland, Iceland and Sweden were not. The need to reach a common position on such things as melting ice, the retreat of glaciers, competition for oil and gas exploitation, sovereign disputes and new sea routes prompted this initiative. The conference could be seen as a way of 'marketing Denmark as an active international actor both generally with respect to peaceful international crisis management ... and concretely with respect to Arctic challenges' (Petersen, 2009: 56). The meeting led to the joint Ilulissat Declaration (2008: 1-2), which promised the following:

By virtue of their sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in large areas of the Arctic Ocean the five coastal states are in a unique position to address these possibilities and challenges. In this regard, we recall that an extensive international legal framework applies to the Arctic Ocean as discussed between our representatives at the meeting in Oslo on 15 and 16 October 2007 at the level of senior officials. Notably, the law of the sea provides for important rights and obligations concerning the delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf, the protection of the marine environment, including ice-covered areas, freedom of navigation, marine scientific research, and other uses of the sea. We remain committed to this legal framework and to the orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims.

The Danish Foreign Minister viewed the declaration as a way of dismissing 'all myths about a race for the North Pole' (*The Guardian*, 29 May 2008). Undoubtedly, an agreement to abide by international law is a step in the right direction towards Arctic stability, peace and good governance, even though the Ilulissat declaration has not been without criticism. More specifically, environmentalists have protested against what they see as the misconstruction of the use of the law of the sea. In the words of Mike Townsley, a Greenpeace spokesperson:

It's clear what's going on. They are going to use the law of the sea to carve up the raw materials, but they are ignoring the law of common sense – these are the same fossil fuels driving climate change in the first place ... The closed door nature of this is doubly troubling. It's clear they know what they're trying to do is unacceptable. (cited in *The Guardian* 29 May 2008)

The latter observation refers to the decision to exclude some actors from the Ilulissat meeting, including, Finland, Iceland and Sweden, environmental NGOs and Inuit representatives, which could be seen as being inconsistent with the multilateral ethos of the AC and other circumpolar institutions.

A few summarising reflections

There is an emerging link between climate change and the possibility of geopolitical instability in the Arctic, but this should not be overstated since there are also many signs of regional governance and cooperation. Still, there is a general tendency among the Arctic coastal states to seek the extension of their national territories in the High North. Too much emphasis on national interests and sovereign gains is, however, inconsistent with the wider processes of globalisation, ethical foreign policy-making and liberal internationalism, all of which advocate the need to think beyond the nation state and to consider one's own national interests in relation to those of one's partners. Given this, it might be counterproductive to overemphasise the territorial disputes played out in the Arctic, when there is evidence to suggest that the region is deeply embedded within multiple governance systems (Lathrop, 2008). For example, a group of American diplomats and researchers have challenged the commonplace position that the security situation in the Arctic is 'heating up' (Yalowitz, Collins and Virginia, 2008: 15). In their words 'security concerns and issues seem not to be the pressing factor driving Arctic policy ... overblown press coverage of Arctic security issues appears to be in the inverse relationship to security realities. There are no large geopolitical fault lines, and no resource wars are anticipated' (ibid.: 17). This is a view supported by Holtsmark and Smith-Windsor (2009: 25), who underline the importance of avoiding 'alarmism' in conceptualising Arctic security. In their words, 'all actors ... should be aware of the need to avoid unfounded alarmism in discussions of High North security issues. All Arctic powers ... have expressed their full support for existing legal regimes and governance structures' (ibid.). DIIS Senior Researcher Svend Aage Christensen concurs by arguing that the agreement between Norway and Russia testifies 'that there is no risk of ... conflicts in the area around the Arctic' (cited in Norden, 2010: 1, my translation).

The argument that there is an imminent threat to stability in the Arctic can thus be challenged on many grounds, not the least because it is inconsistent with the Arctic states' images of themselves as law-abiding collaborative actors with a dual commitment to transnational stability in the Arctic and what they see as their national legal entitlements to the natural riches of the area. The argument pursued here is that negative media representations can be unnecessarily provocative and damaging to the stability of the Arctic. As we have seen above, positive developments have taken place, with Norway and Russia having paved the way to Arctic stability. A three-pronged approach is proposed here:

1. The Arctic coastal states might wish to re-examine their largely Westphalian conception of sovereignty in favour of a cosmopolitan approach that is inclusive and does not rest solely on the rights of the nation state, but on universal entitlements and duties, whereby states have duties to their own citizens and non-citizens alike. The sovereign disagreements that in part define the Arctic, though not of a military kind, are inconsistent with the broader ethos of contemporary ethically inspired foreign and security policies (Chandler, 2003; Dunne and Wheeler, 2001, Dunne, 2008, Bergman and Phythian, 2011, Aggestam, 2008), as well as the multilateral interests of the Arctic institutions.
2. Abiding by international law should be seen as a universal duty rather than something that states do to maximise their territorial extent and national interests.
3. It is crucial that national agencies operating in the Arctic – non-military and military alike – work in tandem with indigenous communities, NGOs and governmental civilian agencies. The involvement of a wide array of actors helps to ensure that the Arctic does not experience power political disagreements between the coastal Arctic states. As Holtsback and Smith-Windsor (2009: 27) have argued, 'thinking about High North security must be guided by a firm intent to avoid a return to the zero sum chess-board reasoning of the Cold War, which presupposed that only one winner would be left on the field.' This position would seem to be both sensible and also in line with the founding values of the Arctic institutions.

PART THREE. Denmark and the Arctic

Denmark's Arctic policy: climate change a priority²

As has been noted above, Denmark has held a number of conferences on the Arctic and climate change and as such actively raised its Arctic profile. Nikolaj Petersen (2009: 56) has defined Denmark's Arctic foreign policy as one of 'active climate diplomacy', which is indeed consistent with the country's pursuit of active internationalism in the 1990s (Holm, 2004). The Danish newspaper *Politiken*'s interpretation of Denmark's Arctic policy is somewhat different in that it argues for a more active Danish stance on the Arctic by pointing out that 'unfortunately Denmark is not one of those states that have highly prioritised the Arctic', having focused on other geographical regions (*Politiken*, 16 May 2011). In 2011, Foreign Minister Lene Espersen expressed a wish to start a debate on the future direction of Danish foreign policy by launching a discussion paper *Kurs mod 2020: Dansk udenrigspolitik i nyt farvand*, in which the key challenges to Denmark are outlined. The Arctic is, however, not the focal point of the document, although a brief reference to the significance of strengthening the AC is made, as well as of collaborating with the other AC states (Udenrigsministeriet 2011: 21).

Denmark's chairmanship of the AC: climate change on the agenda

Denmark's 2009-2011 chairmanship of the AC nonetheless offered good opportunities to strengthen the country's activism in the Arctic. On 29 April 2009, Norway handed over the chairmanship of the Arctic Council to Denmark at the Sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council in Tromsø. The overarching objective of the Danish presidency was to secure 'a forward looking approach and a strong platform for the Arctic Council in the present dynamics of a changing Arctic' (Danish Chairmanship of the AC, 2009: 1). This work was carried out in 'close cooperation with the Governments of Greenland and the Faroe Islands' and other Arctic states.

Furthermore, the Danish chairmanship of the AC rather expectedly highlighted the importance of closely monitoring the negative effects of climate change by 'documenting, analysing and publishing ... levels and effects of contaminants and the changes taking place in snow, water, ice and permafrost' which are key to understanding changes in the 'weather patterns' and 'sea levels' of the Arctic (ibid.). Such gather-

² For an extensive account of Denmark's Arctic policy, see Nikolaj Petersen, 'The Arctic as New Arena for Danish Foreign Policy: The Illulissat Initiative and its Implications', *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2009*; see also Udenrigsministeriet, *Arktis i en brydningstid: Forslag til strategi for aktiviteter i det arktiske område*, 2008.

ing of knowledge is central to the identification of appropriate solutions to global environmental problems and security developments, such as the emergence of new sea routes and disputes over sovereignty.

Hence, climate change-induced developments, including ‘retreating ice caps’ and easier ‘access to hydrocarbons and other non-renewable as well as renewable resources’, are at the centre of Danish arctic policy (ibid.: 2). In an address to Arctic foreign ministers, the former Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Per Stig Møller (2009: 2), stated that ‘adaptation to climate change is a core issue for this forum. But we should also use the Arctic Council to discuss what we as Arctic nations can do to ... mitigate global warming’. Denmark’s overall Arctic objectives also include ‘sustainable development, human health, environmental protection, conservation of flora and fauna’ and the promotion of the well-being and livelihoods of indigenous peoples, which demand a ‘holistic perspective’ (Danish Chairmanship of the AC, 2009: 2). International cooperation was placed at the centre of Denmark’s chairmanship, which is in line with the country’s historical support for multilateralism and its own activist internationalist tradition (Holm, 2004).

In sum, then, the ethos of the Danish chairmanship was to promote the idea of ‘International outreach, research and cooperation with key actors in different policy fields’ as way of ‘securing the success of the Council’ in promoting ‘economic development and prosperity in the North, while ... respecting and safeguarding the rights and interests of the peoples and states of the Arctic’ (ibid.: 2). The work was undertaken within the wider context of climate change, which is key to Denmark’s Arctic policy.

Indeed, Denmark’s Arctic strategy, referred to above, has been drafted against the backdrop of climate change more broadly (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011b: 9). It is argued that such things as rising sea levels and enhanced economic activity can impact upon the prospect of ‘a stable, peaceful and secure region defined by dialogue, negotiation and cooperation’, but, that climate change can also give rise to new possibilities, in particular, the extraction of natural resources, new sea routes and fish stocks in the High North (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011b: 9) and the obvious economic benefits attached to such developments, one might add. For example, the richness of natural resources such as gas and oil in north-east Greenland is expected to yield a substantial income for the island (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011b: 24). What

follows below is a brief overview of the national security measures proposed by Denmark to meet the distinct challenges of the Arctic, as well as a short discussion of some recent security developments specifically affecting Greenland and by extension Denmark itself.

Greenland

National security objectives in the Arctic

The Danish Defence Commission (DDC) report of 2008 contains 339 pages on the key premises of Danish security and defence policy in the near to medium-term future. The DDC notes that, although there are no conventional security threats to Denmark, globalisation, terrorism, new non-governmental security actors, climate change and environmental depletion are among the factors that have to be considered in the context of Danish defence policy (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2009). The

Map 4. Greenland



<http://wpp.greenwichmeantime.com/images/time/europe/greenland.jpg>

Commission defines the Arctic as one of the key regions to be affected by a changing international environment:

The Arctic regions are expected to attract increasing international attention in the period leading up to 2025. The continued melting of the polar ice cap that is expected as a result of global warming will open new opportunities for raw material extraction and the opening of new sailing routes. The rising activity will change the region's geostrategic dynamic and significance. (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2009: 12)

Furthermore, 'as a consequence of the expected increase in traffic and level of activity, a proper risk analysis of the maritime environment in and around Greenland should be conducted ... possibilities for enhancing surveillance in and around Greenland should also be investigated', and an analysis conducted of the overall role of the Danish armed forces in the Arctic (Danish Ministry of Defence 2009:62).

As part of its overall Arctic policy, and, as a way of protecting its sovereign integrity and interests in an era defined by climate change, in 2009 Denmark announced that it would establish an Arctic Response Force and an Arctic Command Structure (*Politiken*, 15 July 2009). The response force will help to enhance Denmark's competence in the Arctic and in and around Greenland. The Danish defence agreement for 2010-2014 points out that the planned Arctic Response Force is 'to be designated from the existing capabilities of the Danish armed forces, which, depending on the situation, can be established and composed of units from all armed services that possess an Arctic capability' (Danish Defence Agreement, 2009: 12). All political parties in the Folketing apart from the *Enhedslisten* have declared their support for such a force. However, the former head of the Greenland Command, Axel Fiedler, has called it an 'unnecessary militarization of Greenland' (*Barents Observer*, 15 July 2009a).

The agreement also notes that there will be a new Danish North Atlantic operational command structure whereby the 'the Greenland Command and the Faroe Command are to be combined into a joint service Arctic Command' and, moreover, that 'the most appropriate location of such an Arctic Command is to be considered and determined' (Danish Defence Agreement 2009: 12). Moreover, the defence agreement highlights the need for 'a comprehensive analysis of the future tasks of the Danish Armed Forces in the Arctic ... including an analysis of whether or not advantages exist in entering into closer cooperation with other Nordic countries, the USA, Canada,

Russia and the UK regarding surveillance and other similar tasks' (ibid.). Related to this is the question raised by the Commission of whether a distinct surveillance system is needed that 'could also be implemented and further developed in regard to shipping near Greenland' (ibid.).

Denmark and Greenland

The relationship between Denmark and Greenland is continually changing, with the latter developing its own global profile in the Arctic specifically and in international society generally. Greenland was colonised by Denmark in 1775, and almost two hundred years later the island was made a Danish province. Denmark granted Greenland home rule in 1979, which gave the island jurisdiction in certain public policy areas, including health care, education and social services. Furthermore, Greenland decided to leave the European Economic Community in 1985 to acquire full control over its fisheries policy. The status of Greenland's autonomy was put to scrutiny in the late 1990s, with demands for self-rule emerging.

In 2008 a referendum on further political and legal autonomy was held in Greenland, which resulted in an overwhelming majority in favour of self-rule. The practical effects of the referendum is that self-rule will be extended to a number of key areas, including the police, the judiciary and the coast guard, and a certain level of co-determination in the area of foreign policy will take place, all of which have bearing on security-related developments in the region (Statsministeriet, 2009a). It was also decided that the indigenous language of Kalaallisut would be the single official language (ibid.). In addition there will be a more equal distribution of future oil revenues, which will allow Greenland to generate more of its own GNP, and as such make it increasingly self-sustainable and less dependent on Danish financial contributions (ibid.). Danish subsidies will be gradually phased out to make Greenland solely responsible for its own economy. The official arrangement is that:

The Danish Government subsidy to the Self-Government authorities is fixed by law at DKK 3.4 billion kroner annually (2009 price and wage levels). Should the Self-Government authorities obtain revenues from mineral resource activities, the Danish Government subsidy to the Self-Government authorities is to be reduced by an amount equal to 50 per cent of such revenue exceeding DKK 75 million annually. When the Danish Government subsidy to the Self-Government authorities has been reduced to zero kroner, the subsidy will be discontinued and no further subsidy will be provided hereafter. (Statsministeriet, 2009a: 2)

Of interest here is also the decision to give Greenlanders the right to be treated as a separate people under international law and as such adding force to its distinct Inuit identity (Statsministeriet, 2009a). Denmark will nonetheless remain in formal control of foreign and security policy, although more opportunities will be given to Greenland to impact upon developments that affect the island specifically (Statsministeriet, 2009a, 2009b). As *Information* reported on 17 May 2011, the forthcoming Danish Arctic Strategy highlights the significance of involving Greenland in strategically important decisions concerning the environmental effects of any future extraction of oil and gas reserves. For example, the cited strategy contains information about Greenland's imposition of high environmental standards on its relationship with the Scottish oil company Cairn Energy, with the latter having discovered oil reserves in the vicinity of Greenland, a development which is described by the strategy as being 'very positive' (*Information* 17 May 2011).

As is the case in other parts of the Circumpolar North, Greenland faces a number of challenges, widely recognised as being induced by climate change, which will have implications for local Inuit communities that are employed in traditional trades. Unless the rising sea levels caused by melting ice are reversed, this could have highly negative effects on many aspects of the local economy. In short, some fish stocks and hunting grounds are being reduced, with effects on local economies. A parallel development, however, is that climate change might indeed enhance the availability of certain crops and fish stocks.

On the strategic level, new sea routes are fast emerging due to ice-free areas in the Arctic, which could give rise to a potential oil race affecting Greenland and by extension Denmark. It is interesting to observe, however, that the

US Geological Survey (USGS) more than halved its estimate of the potential oil and gas riches off the coast of Greenland. In 2000, the USGS estimate was 40bn barrels of oil. In 2008, that was cut to 10-20bn barrels. Experts agree that it could well be 15-20 years before the oil is found – and even longer before the huge investments required pay dividends' (*BBC NEWS*, 27 November 2008)

In sum, Greenland is carving out a space for itself in global politics, and some of its bargaining power can be expected to emerge from the vast natural reserves that have yet to be extracted in and around the island. However, as the US Geological Survey has reported, the reserves may not be quite as vast as first expected. Paradoxically enough, this might mean that one of the island's (and Denmark's) bargaining chips

on the international stage is the Thule base, which is key to western defence strategies and US security interests. What follows below is a brief examination of the events that have unfolded in Greenland as a result of the request by the USA to renew and upgrade the Thule base.

The Thule military base

As the host of America's military base at Thule, Greenland is strategically important to both Denmark and the USA. In the aftermath of World War II, Denmark entered into an agreement on a bilateral defence treaty with the USA which gave the latter access to Greenland for military purposes. The US built a ballistic missile early-warning radar system in Thule between 1958 and 1960, and Greenland became a significant aspect of the US defence system against the USSR during the Cold War. It also became part of NATO's defence strategy. The Thule Base is run by the 821st Air Base Group, which employs military and civilian personnel from the USA, Canada, Denmark and Greenland to provide missile warning, space surveillance, and satellite command and control operations. The multinational dimension of the base could be an advantage in terms of developing further cooperation amongst the coastal states in the Arctic if used productively and with the interests of the entire region in mind.

Renewal and upgrading the Thule base

The USA presented a request to Denmark on 17 December 2002 for the continued use and upgrading of the Thule base (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002: 1). This inspired interesting debates with regard to the strategic and political relationship between Greenland, Denmark and the USA. The air base is central to Greenland's (and Denmark's) positioning in global politics, and the former plays an important role in the national missile defence (NMD) system of the USA and by extension NATO. Furthermore, Thule harbour 'may provide a base for sovereignty control, fishery inspection and environmental control ... in the waters north of Greenland', while the Thule air base 'could provide a base for Danish long-range inspection aircraft' (Petersen, 2009: 72), both of which give Denmark a considerable advantage in the Arctic.

Greenland responded to the US request for permission to upgrade the Thule base by placing a number of demands on the latter, including assurances that the Home Rule Government (HRG) would be given an equal footing in talks on the destiny of the base. The island played its strategic cards well and demonstrated impressive diplomatic skills in negotiations with the USA and Denmark. Amongst other things,

the HRG placed a normative demand on the USA and Denmark which involved a guarantee that the upgrade of the base would not jeopardise international peace and order (Kristensen, 2004: 12). In his detailed analysis of the negotiations preceding the 2004 agreement, Kristensen (2004: 13) argues that the Greenlandic position on the Thule base was embedded in moral arguments about the peacefulness of the island. Similarly, Dragsdahl (2005: 16) contends that some Home Rule 'politicians drew on a pacifist element in traditional Inuit culture', whereby '(t)he modern military is thus seen as an alien phenomenon'.

Another key argument associated with Greenland's role in the renewing of the Thule agreement is the observation that the HRG used the process as a way of extracting greater independence from Denmark (Kristensen, 2004; Enoksen, 2003). Kristensen points to the emphasis that the Greenlandic HRG placed upon co-decision-making powers in the negotiations leading up to the three-party agreement on the Thule base. Dragsdahl (2005: 17) goes as far as to argue that what mattered most in the negotiations was perhaps not international peace and the spread of missile defence as much as Greenlandic politicians' wish to 'enlarge Home Rule, independence being the final goal'.

The amended version of the 1951 agreement on the defence of Greenland nonetheless contained references to 'the goal of international peace and peaceful co-existence, and respecting the important contribution of Greenland to this end' and recognised 'Greenland's contribution to the mutual security interests and its consequent sharing of the associated risks and responsibilities', as well as 'the commitment of the Parties to continuing close cooperation within NATO in ensuring North Atlantic security' (Powell, Møller and Motzfeldt, 2004: 1).

Despite successfully having managed to carve out a place for itself in the Thule negotiations, Greenland's proposal to establish a joint defence commission to overlook security developments in the north Atlantic Sea was not realised (Dragsdahl, 2005). Yet, the skilful conduct of diplomacy demonstrated its present and future potential to have an impact on important security developments in the High North.

The US Secretary of State at the time, Colin Powell, the Foreign Minister of Greenland, Josef Motzfeldt, and the then Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Per Stig Møller, therefore met in the Greenlandic village of Igaliku on 6 August 2004 to sign an agreement that allowed the US to upgrade its radar system at the Thule base (Powell, Møller and Motzfeldt, 2004). The Thule base remains key to Danish foreign

and security policy, as it gives both the former and Greenland an opportunity to have an impact upon international security developments that they would not otherwise have had. From a normative perspective it is important that the two actors use their power responsibly in consideration of the interests of the other Arctic states and global security and peace more broadly.

The way forward: civil-military cooperation in the Arctic North

The nature of the security challenges currently facing the Arctic are of such a kind that they cannot be met by military means alone. A number of agencies, actors systems of governance need to be involved in the combating of climate change, environmental depletion and disputes over sovereignty, and these include national militaries, legal agencies, coastguards, rescue services and scientists. Canada has generally been seen as a pioneer in using civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) as way of dealing with contemporary security developments and conflicts. However, this is also a philosophy embraced by Denmark and the other Nordic states. CIMIC is key to Denmark's participation in international missions, as well as its Arctic policy (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008: 1).

The DDC states that 'lessons learned from international operations indicate that there is a need for an integrated approach to the planning and implementation of military and civilian aspects of activities' (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2009: 60). A joint report authored by the Danish Foreign Ministry and Greenland confirms this claim by arguing that the key tasks of the Danish Armed Forces in the Arctic are to guarantee Danish sovereignty and conduct non-military tasks, such as carrying out inspections of fisheries, assisting the police local force, the tax authorities and civil society, and preventing environmental depletion. What is more, it should conduct scientific work as long as it is consistent with its military priorities (Udenrigsministeriet and Namminersornerullutik Oqartussat, 2008: 12). A dual approach to Arctic security is thus advocated, rather than one solely resting upon military means, which is in line with the transformation of western militaries into 'forces for good' (Bergman, 2004).

The idea that the Danish military has a key role to play in Greenland and by extension the Arctic is thus in line with the broad directions in Denmark's defence policy. As a adherent to the Stoltenberg Report, *Nordic Cooperation on Foreign and Security Policy*, which was presented on 9 February 2009 by the former Norwegian Foreign Minister, Thorvald Stoltenberg, Denmark has to some extent committed itself to using its security policy for multiple purposes in the Arctic by, for example, establishing

a 'Nordic system ... for monitoring and early warning in the Nordic sea areas. The system should in principle be civilian and be designed for tasks such as monitoring the marine environment and pollution and monitoring of civilian traffic' (Stoltenberg, 2009: 12). The system would provide monitoring of the Arctic Ocean and the Barents Sea, amongst other things, and it would be a Nordic-wide undertaking. Stoltenberg thus envisages a broad use of national security policies, including non-military and military dimensions, to cater for the distinct needs of the Arctic. Furthermore, he proposes that '(t)he Nordic countries, which are all members of the Arctic Council, should develop cooperation on Arctic issues focusing on more practical matters. The environment, climate change, maritime safety and search and rescue services are appropriate areas for such cooperation' (2009: 19). This is also the view developed in Denmark's Arctic Strategy, which favours a broad approach to Arctic developments combining military and civil measures, including a new joint command structure and the application of international law, active support for regional institutions and the involvement of indigenous communities in important decision-making processes (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011b: 2). Below a few tentative thoughts are presented that centre on the Arctic as a site for community-building exercises across borders, rather than a mere hotspot for disputes over competing claims to sovereignty and commercial interests.

PART FOUR. Community-building and multiple understandings of the Arctic

Like other regions, the Arctic could be conceptualised as a socially constructed region and as such its identity/ies, interests and normative foundations are not static, but continuously changing. The social construction of new regional spaces in Europe and beyond has been subjected to much academic investigation (see special issue of *Comparative European Politics* 2006, 4). Browning and Joenniemi have examined changes in the Baltic Sea region since the end of the Cold War and argue that it has 'transformed rapidly into a laboratory of innovative ways of dealing with the divisive nature of borders' (Browning and Joenniemi, 2004: 233). The two authors nonetheless warn against investing too much in security as the sole basis for region-building efforts across borders and contend that the peaceful construction of 'Norden could serve as an inspiration in the Baltic Sea context' (p. 248). Similarly, Bergman (2002, 2006) has closely investigated the emergence of a Nordic-Baltic sphere of community in the post-Cold War era, a process defined as a single 'adjacent internationalism', and pointed to the significance of civic regionalisation in sustaining new transnational spaces. These are valuable insights in the Arctic context since they suggest that security, whether soft or hard, cannot alone foster new regional loyalties and identities and that popular support and civil involvement are key to new forms of governance (regional, global and indigenous), as well as processes of regionalisation.

The Arctic nonetheless distinguishes itself from other regional spaces because most of the Arctic land mass is not populated by human beings, which can be detrimental to the creation of a sense of shared identity across national frontiers. However, by providing financial support for locally-grown bottom-up activities across national spaces and ensuring that Arctic policies take account of indigenous and local needs, such obstacles can be overcome. In *Transformation of the Political Community* Andrew Linklater seeks to reconcile our communitarian/national and cosmopolitan/global obligations to nationals and non-nationals by arguing for a new conception of community which allows for cultural diversity and universalism. If we were to apply this way of thinking to the Arctic, it would effectively mean the Arctic states conducting their foreign and security policies in consideration of the needs and interests of their partners, whether those are indigenous communities or other states. Of particular relevance here is Linklater's defence of 'the ideal that every human being has an equal right to participate in dialogue to determine the

principles of inclusion and exclusion which govern global politics' (ibid.: 107). The idea is that all humans who are affected by a certain decision should be invited to participate in political dialogue, including indigenous people and minorities, an idea that is highly applicable to the Arctic, where the emphasis is very much placed upon the active involvement of indigenous representatives in governance systems and processes, or what Fondahl and Irlbacher Fox define as 'indigenous governance'. Promoting the rights of indigenous and local communities through their participation in the deliberations of regional institutions could lead to an emergent form of civic consensus across borders.

The Danish Arctic Strategy endorses this position by arguing that it should be implemented in such a way that it benefits the peoples of the Arctic "in relation to economic and societal development" (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011b: 23). This involves supporting Arctic people's right to their own natural reserves, as well as their right to preserve their distinct cultures and traditions (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011b: 24). From this it follows that new policy initiatives, whether unilateral or multilateral, need to be coupled with local bottom-up activities so as to give voice to people directly affected by Arctic developments (Linklater, 1998). Climate change and the threat of national expansionism are global issues that demand a mixture of indigenous, local, regional, national and international forms of governance, as well as participation in political dialogue. This way of thinking could also inform the work of the national militaries and rescue services that operate in the Arctic, so as to ensure that local knowledge is firmly embedded in the concrete implementation of various Arctic policies. In this context, Linklater holds that 'norms cannot be regarded as universally valid unless they have or could command the consent of all those who stand to be affected by them' (Linklater, 1998: 96).

What is more, because the Arctic is socially constructed, albeit geographically very real, it is possible to rethink the region so as to ensure that it is associated with progress, stability and civilian forms of collaboration, rather than competing national interests alone. Denmark and the other Nordic states could not only function as sources of ideational inspiration by *marketing* typically old-style Nordic values such as internationalism, non-proliferation, solidarity, welfarism and international law and cooperation, but also share their distinct experience of peaceful inter-Nordic co-operation with their Arctic partners. This is not a matter of imposing one's own values upon other states and communities, but to offer an alternative understanding of the Arctic that is constituted within discourses of peaceful inter-state relations,

rather than unhelpful and at times exaggerated realist-inspired constructions depicting the High North as a trouble spot.

This, however, begs the question of whether there is one Arctic region or several. The Arctic region means different things to different people: for some it is where they live and work, for others it is the site of political power disputes, and for yet others it is an unusually peaceful economic, social and political project.³ Thinking in terms of multiple articulations might lead to greater sensitivity to the diversity of interests in the Arctic, while striving for new forms of cooperation and community-building efforts. This, however, requires moving beyond the 'alarmism' (Holtsmark and Smith-Windsor, 2009: 25) that has defined the Arctic in recent years and as such avoiding any further 'heating up' of the security situation in the High North (Yalowitz, Collins and Virginia, 2008: 15). This is not to deny the significance of hard security issues, but to acknowledge the need for multiple articulations of the Circumpolar North so as to ensure that a wide range of actors are involved in the ongoing construction of a peaceful Arctic area.

Concluding remarks and policy recommendations

One of the main objectives of this report has been to evaluate the significance of institutions and governance in promoting Arctic stability and in the final analysis peace. A second objective has been to evaluate some of the security challenges currently facing the Arctic, with a particular emphasis on Denmark. The discussion commenced with a brief historical account of the Arctic and argued that there are certain historical developments that are of value in conceptualising contemporary issues in the Circumpolar North. More specifically, it pointed to the centrality of popular involvement in Arctic policy initiatives and collective actions as a way of transforming the High North into a 'zone of peace' by creating a sense of shared identity across national borders, an idea that was followed through in the third part of the report.

The report then turned to the institutionalisation of the region and offered three key recommendations that all broadly pointed to the significance of institutions and governance in creating peace and stability in the Circumpolar North. The following three recommendations were presented:

³ For example, Denmark's distinct understanding of the Arctic is closely linked with its special relationship with Greenland, which gives the former a sense of belonging to a wider circumpolar space, if not sharing an emergent regional identity.

- First, Arctic multilateral institutions need to ensure that their circumpolar policy initiatives do not suffer from too much overlapping since this can impinge upon effective decision-making. A fair measure of dialogue between local communities, international organisations and member states can help to avoid overlapping policy initiatives.
- Secondly, it is imperative that Arctic institutions continue to recognise the importance of involving indigenous and local communities in deliberations and concrete policy initiatives to ensure that these are firmly rooted at the grassroots level.
- Thirdly, it is not unconceivable that there is a need to debate military security developments formally within regional contexts such as the AC at some point in the future. In sum, the Arctic states could make more effective use of multilateral frameworks to stimulate an open and frank security dialogue across borders, in so doing opening up discussions regarding possible routes to collective security and non-proliferation, thus distancing themselves from a potential militarisation of the Arctic.

The report then provided an account of some of the contemporary security developments in the Arctic, in particular by focusing on the interrelationship between climate change, sovereignty and security. The report also provided an overview of Danish Arctic policy, both civilian and defence-related aspects being considered. It was observed that, while promoting multilateralism and international co-operation as the key premises upon which its Arctic security policy rests, Denmark also has committed itself to the adoption of new security instruments to deal with future developments in the Arctic, including a new response force and joint command structure. Greenland was also the subject of investigation, and it was noted that the island has rather successfully managed to carve out a space for itself in global politics. Moreover, it has ensured its right to be consulted with regard to foreign and security policy issues that directly affect the island's population. The brief account of the Thule negotiations testify to this development. This part of the report ended by pointing to the significance of combining civil and military measures in meeting the challenges of the Arctic, which is in line with the key premises of Danish foreign and security policy, as well as the reasoning underlying the Stoltenberg Report of 2009 more broadly.

The last part of the report made a case for the formation of new forms of commonality and solidarity across the Circumpolar North as a peace strategy and a way of avoiding damaging tensions between the Arctic states. In so doing, it advocated an approach

to Arctic community-building that accommodates the interests of local communities as well as states so as to give the former a voice in key negotiations, all in line with the philosophy of Andrew Linklater. It was also suggested that Denmark and the other Nordic states could not only function as sources of ideational inspiration by *marketing* distinctively Nordic values, but also share their experiences of peaceful inter-Nordic co-operation with their Arctic partners.

On the basis of the analysis carried out in this report, three main policy recommendations seem worth considering:

1. The Arctic states should continue to promote global governance and international cooperation as ways of ensuring future stability in the Circumpolar North. Institutions such as the AC can serve to counterbalance an emerging tendency among the Arctic coastal states to pursue narrowly defined national interests and claims to sovereignty in the Arctic area. This approach involves open and inclusive dialogue between governments, regional institutions and representatives from indigenous and local communities.
2. Arctic coastal states need to refrain from using the concept of sovereignty in a manner that hampers stability and peace in the Circumpolar North. This implies conceptualising sovereignty in an other-regarding manner that does not centre on national security and defence alone. In so doing, the Arctic states could promote a conception of sovereignty that promotes the rights of both people and sovereign states, rather than the latter alone. Such an approach to sovereignty is in line with the emphasis placed upon the emerging global norms of responsibility to protect and provide human security that underpin contemporary IR. What is more, the Arctic actors should continue to promote international law (and abide by it) since this a way of avoiding verbal disputes. It is nonetheless important that states refrain from using international law to further their own interests narrowly defined, since this can be damaging to international governance and security.
3. Despite frequently having been couched within the framework of *Realpolitik*, the Arctic is a fruitful site for community-building clustered around good inter-state relations and the productive involvement of indigenous and local populations in key decision-making processes. The ‘alarmism’ that has been associated with the Arctic through media constructions, for example, is detrimental to the emergence of new spheres of community and loyalties in the Circumpolar North and as such should be resisted whenever possible.

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