Arctic Security Order:

Collective Security, Collective Defense, or Something New?¹

Introduction

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The melting of ice in the Arctic has mobilised considerable analytical interest in the region. New resources such as minerals, fisheries, and oil and gas, as well as new sea lines of communication become available, promising to connect Asia and the Atlantic more intimately and efficiently. On this, there is widespread agreement. The implications are more difficult to gauge, though, as the underlying order is in flux. It is not clear what kind of era this opening of the Arctic is heralding.²

It is first of all possible that new opportunities will knit even tighter the human web that undergirds globalisation, raising further the awareness that the Arctic can be exploited only if major powers, local actors, and international organisations come together to manage this face of the global commons. It is also possible, however, that the distribution of resources and access to lines of communication will become a subject of

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¹ Editor's Note: The footnotes in this article and in the others in this issue of the *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* have been left in the European format in which they were received, except that they have been placed at the bottom of the page to ease readability. We apologize for any confusion this may cause our North American readers.

² Ebinger and Zambetakis, 2009; Blunden, 2009; Murgatroyd, 2009; Keskitalo, 2007; Hong, 2011; Conley and Kraut, 2010; Ruby, 2012; Trenin and Baev, 2010.

national jealousy and rivalry, off-setting a game of relative gains that will pitch insiders against outsiders and make the Arctic a cause of realignment in the global quest for power and influence.

We are in effect facing a familiar contrast between concepts of order, between collective security and collective defense. Collective security is not directed against anyone; it is instead committed to good governance and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. It calls on all nations to respond to acts of aggression but it does not single out potential causes of such aggression. Collective security, therefore, has no geography. Collective defense is inversely directed against specific opponents. The purpose is to provide a military capacity for defense, and this capacity is inherently linked to geography. If the 'new Arctic' is boosting awareness of the global commons, it could boost the potential of collective security; conversely, it could inflame tensions and set off the formation of alliances so central to collective defense.

There is no short cut into this problem and thus no easy way to obtain answers. Consider the case of the Arctic Council. Formed in 1996, it has become the locus of Arctic decision-making. Its members are the five Arctic coastal states (Canada, the United States, Denmark, Norway, and Russia) and in addition Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. It does lend itself as a case of collective security: it is focused on the management of common resources and problems, the coastal states are all there, and they have agreed to regulate political issues with reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Not coincidentally, the two formal agreements that have been entered among the Arctic states concern search and rescue and then environmental protection, both of which relate back to a common vulnerabilities. However, the Arctic Council is also a club of the countries that have access. Those who do not can contest it, and they have done so in small but important ways. The Arctic Council has thus opened up to more observers, but observation is not membership. As resources start to flow, and as shipping lanes crowd up, these fault lines could become more important. Also, the argument that the Arctic should be governed not merely by UNCLOS but by its own treaty, as is the case in Antartica, may gain traction and invite a race to redefine the distribution of influence. If dynamics such as these make their mark, then we are dealing with a case of collective defense. The

Arctic security order is no simple matter, therefore, and before we begin the in-depth assessment hereof we shall review the basic concepts that can guide our interpretation.

Collective security

The prospect that the world will come together to manage the Arctic is inherently based on the idea that the main players in the international system face similar problems. At issue is not only access to lines of communication, a fairly mute point, but the deeper challenge of providing for sustainable growth and development.³ Advanced and emerging economies alike depend on natural resources because without them, they cannot provide for the growth that provides for social equity. And as growth happens, more resources are needed. In early 2013, the president of Conoco Philips Europe, Steiner Vaage, thus argued that the world needs 'more transportation and electricity generation' because '[t]here are 80 million people joining the global middle class each year,' while lieutenant governor of Alaska, Mead Treadwell, foresaw that 'The Arctic can truly can feed and fuel the world'.⁴

It is a mainstay of liberal theory that everyone has a stake in economic growth and that as growth happens, interdependence will sustain cooperation and international organisation. It is not to say that cooperation will be easy. In fact, shared resources can become subject to exploitation which leads to the degradation of the human and natural environment and which in turns sparks conflict. Thus, whenever we are dealing with 'commons,' we are also facing a potential 'tragedy of the commons.' Garrett Hardin in many ways fathered this concept in his dissection of how the asymmetry between individual gain and collective cost can provoke the overuse and ultimately destruction of common resources.⁵ The problem is enhanced by the tendency of political systems to institutionalise the right to individual gain, even if the costs are collective, such as when families and firms are allowed to maximise 'profits' (size of family, e.g., or resource extraction such as fishing or mining, and also consumption of energy) while costs are left to the political arena to sort out.

³ Berkman, 2012.

⁴ Moran, 2013.

⁵ Hardin, 1968.

One liberal answer to these challenges is to balance the books by privatizing costs. To an extent this is an option in the Arctic, for instance with the costs of environmental clean-up of resource exploitation. However, the Arctic is mostly about water, on top of which is ice, and to a lesser extent about land, and challenges and costs therefore move across boundaries with exceptional ease. Overfishing in Norway's waters will hurt neighbors, as will pollution from offshore exploitation in Alaska or Russia; and search and rescue capacities for international waters demand the coordination of national policies. These aspects of the maritime environment call for collective action.⁶

Another liberal answer is therefore to incite and regulate such collective action.⁷ Key here is the UNCLOS, which defines and regulates territorial boundaries at sea, including the right to enforce laws and exploit resources. UNCLOS is the bedrock on which current political relations in the Arctic are shaped. Another example is the Svalbard Treaty that grants Norway sovereignty over the Svalbard archipelago but other signatories – of which there are currently 42 – commercial and scientific rights. In the end, there may be no one bedrock of Arctic governance but rather a 'mosaic of cooperation.'⁸

The main strategy for strengthening the public regulation of the Arctic and thus providing for a type of collective security order is to flesh out new rules appropriate for the new Arctic. These rules apply to the above-mentioned issues of fishing, pollution, search and rescue, and other issues as well, and they should be made compatible with UNCLOS, naturally, but be shaped to the Arctic reality. Moreover, the management of rules should be placed in the hands of an international organisation that brings together all stakeholders and provides transparent and open channels of influence to those who seek it. It is not a question of ignoring national interests but of mutualizing them and bending them towards peaceful adjustment and sustainable common solutions.

The Arctic Council is the most probable candidate for such an international organisation but it has still to sort out a number of issues relating to membership and influence. As mentioned, it has eight member states and then also a number of

⁶ Brosnon et al., 2011.

⁷ Brigham, 2010; Stokke, 2011; Mager, 2009.

⁸ Young, 2009; Young, 2005.

Indigenous Peoples organisations as members: the question is whether it can agree to develop a partner-concept that allows for the structured and permanent inclusion of such heavy-weights as China, the EU, Japan, and South Korea. There are other conflicts to be sorted out – such as the geographical reach of the Svalbard Treaty, an issue that pitches Norway, which seeks to limit its reach to protect its national territory, against Russia – but the most fundamental issue concerns the Arctic Council.

Collective defense

When (now former) president of China, Hu Jintao, undertook the first state visit of China to Denmark in mid-June of 2012, observers could take comfort in the dialogue that a great powers such as China is willing to entertain with a small state. Conversely, they could find cause for concern that China is pursuing a national strategy of access to strategic minerals in the Arctic, and in this case the rare earth minerals located within the Danish Kingdom, and in particular in Greenland. With Greenland already being host to a strategic U.S. radar site, the Thule Air Base, the contours of a grander conflict among the giants of this world might be coming into being. If so, the question is not how much power and electricity that can be generated from the Arctic but who gets to control it. 10

Realist theory deals essentially in power and argues that power is better off if balanced. The unchecked, frantic search for power gains – whether in terms of resources, territory, or prestige – is inherently difficult to control and will sooner or later devolve into hot war. Control of power is critical, therefore, and in international terms control implies the management of power relations by statesmen and diplomats. In this perspective, conventions and sets of rules, such as UNCLOS, are useful not because they represent a rulebook to which states can be expected to adhere but because they help keep political concepts of order in alignment. What matters is the underlying balance of power between, say, Western and Chinese concepts of order and therefore

⁹ Archer and Fraende, 2012.

¹⁰ Huebert, 2010.

the ability of Western and Chinese statesmen to manage their balance by way of conventions and rulebooks.

Such a fine-tuned balance of power is particularly difficult to establish when geopolitical conditions are in flux. The opening of the Arctic upsets the 'old' geopolitical order. This order was composed essentially of a Eurasian land mass, which holds the greatest power potential, and the Americas. The climatic belt favorable to large-scale agriculture, and therefore large-scale society, cuts horizontally across the globe just north of the Tropic of Cancer and define the seat of political power: this is North America as well as the coastal plains of Europe and Asia. Eurasia may hold greater potential than North America but topography combined with politics have divided up this potential, and each of the coastal plains therefore host not only a powerful island nation (Britain and Japan, respectively) but also a plurality of continental states. The United States has been more fortunate: it is continentally secure, located in the heart of the climatic belt and with easy oceanic access to the two Eurasian centers, all of which has created a geopolitical order in which the United States had the power and intent to build relationships that ensure its access to these regions and simultaneously prevent their domination by other powers. The 'new Arctic' does not fundamentally alter this set of relationships but does introduce at least three new significant elements.

First of all, it is slowly but surely transforming Russia from a potential heartland (a geographically insulated power) to a large rimland (a coastal power). It will inevitably impact on Russia's political outlook and foreign policy purpose. To an extent, Russia has lacked such a purpose since the end of the Cold War, and while a new foreign policy will provide new directions for international affairs it could also challenge established powers or, in the case of the Arctic, newcomers to the game. Moreover, it could harden the attitude of notably Norway to link Arctic issues to the collective defense alliance, NATO, and reemphasise regional geography within NATO's command structure.

Secondly, it is opening a new chapter in the relationship between the two North American neighbors, the United States and Canada. Hitherto a relationship marked by U.S. leadership in establishing North American influence in Europe and Asia, it will

¹¹ Antrim, 2010; Zysk, 2011a; Zysk, 2011b; Fenenko, 2012.

¹² Hilde, 2011; Tamnes, 2011.

now also be a relationship marked by Canada's assertion of national rights in regards to the Northwest passage, parts of which fall under Canadian jurisdiction according to Canada but not according to the United States. The Arctic may not transform North American diplomacy – the power discrepancy between the two is just too large – but it will add a new flavor to the relationship.

Finally, it will bring Europe and Asia – the two fringes of Eurasia – into greater contact. Their economic relationship has grown significantly over the past decades but diplomatic relations have tended to involve the United States as the Western leader, partly because the United States is heavily present in Asia, partly because Europe is not. Now the Europe-Asia relationship gains a cause for developing an independent diplomatic dimension, particularly as China, South Korea, Japan and others cultivate relations to Arctic nations and perhaps in particular the smaller ones more amendable to new diplomacy, such as Iceland, Denmark, and Norway.

What this means is that the old ways of conducting diplomacy and managing balances of power are challenged. NATO is not really discussing the Arctic because Canada does not want any peer pressure, and the EU is only slowly coming to grips with the commercial and political potential of the northern region. From a collective defense perspective, the question is whether Western nations can cohere, as they have done in the past, and to which extent they can work with Russia to create a response to the incursions of China, the most dynamic of powers, in the region.¹³

Gauging the future

We have organised this special issue to provide some answers to the question of what the future beckons for the Arctic in terms of order. It is of capital importance whether the Arctic tilts in the direction of cooperation or confrontation, and the authors of this book were asked not to provide firm answers, which would not be possible, but qualified assessments. They are each commendable on their own terms. Put together, they provide a fulsome overview and also an indication that the coming Arctic order may steer a middle course between cooperation and conflict whereby conflict is

¹³ Manicon, 2013.

contained within sub-regional structures of conflict management. We shall return to this possible future in the conclusion.

We begin with an overview of the range of interests and agendas that must be fitted into an Arctic order. In his article, Nils Wang takes as his starting point the new opportunities in the region and enters into a succinct discussion of the national positions involved. Wang finds ground for the conclusion that peaceful relations will prevail, partly because commercial interests are strong, partly because the Arctic powers are in alignment already, as evidenced by the 2008 Illulissat Declaration that promised the lawful regulation of conflicts. However, the Declaration also, though by implication, made the Arctic powers the sine qua none of decision-making. It was not politically neutral, therefore, and the question is whether the interests of outside powers will change the game. In May 2013, the game did change but on terms largely favorable to the Arctic Council. It happened as the Council members agreed to grant observer status to six outside countries wishing to participate in Arctic diplomacy, including China, India, and Italy. The Council is thus defined as the hub of Arctic diplomacy, but the wider question Wang poses, namely whether the distribution of influence that the Council members seek to preserve is tenable in the long run, remains valid.

It leads us to inquire into the prospect for regional governance as it emanates from the Arctic Council. It is a challenge picked up by Alyson Bailes. The starting point for Bailes is the notable absence of the traditional governance structures, such as the UN, the OSCE, and NATO (including the NATO-Russia Council) that big players normally bring in their wake. It tempts the conclusion that in the absence of these levelers of control, the regional governance potential is low. However, Bailes directs her attention to the sub-regional level of governance and finds some ground for optimism. Sub-regional governance is not new: it can be observed in old 'brotherhood' clubs such as the Benelux or the Nordic Council but notably also in new 'neighborhood' clubs such as the two councils of Baltic and Barents Sea states. When viewed in light of these councils, the Arctic Council appears with the usual set of weaknesses (no capacity to address military issues, no real budget, no law-making potential etc.) but also a remarkable set of strengths, including a history of common cooperation in regards to practical problems or scientific exploration, a common interest vis-à-vis outsiders, and networks of experts and local officials that operate across borders. It could make of the

Arctic Council a 'club' with considerable potential to inspire and direct Arctic-wide governance.

Wang and Bailes are thus broadly confident that Arctic governance is possible, which pulls in the direction of some kind of collective security. We therefore turn to three issues that could spell trouble: the anxieties that China's involvement and weight could provoke; the disruptions that the EU could engender by way of its complex make-up and tendency for political idealism; and the politics and economics surrounding one of the great prizes of the Arctic game, namely access to the resources of Greenland – formally part of Denmark but with home rule and an ambition to achieve greater independence. We know from the Arctic summit in May 2013 that China made it into the Arctic Council as an observer but the EU did not. We also know that Greenland absented from the summit because it wanted its own seat and not merely representation within the Danish delegation. Something is afoot, it seems.

David Curtis Wright addresses the issue and role of China. It is the most significant of the non-Arctic states, the most dynamic power of them all, and it clearly has Arctic ambitions. However, while it is apparent that China's activities in the region are increasing, the nature of its ambitions is not so straightforward. As Wright observers, it could be that China is still sorting it out, and we should be careful not to suppose that China is more strategic than other states. It does appear that China is motivated by a combination of climate concerns, transportation interests, and access to minerals and energy. This would be eminently manageable were it not for China's size and not least its sense of entitlement, which Wright underscores. A military confrontation is highly unlikely but a political and commercial one could well happen.

The case of the European Union – the absent pretender to Arctic Council observer status – is a peculiar case of morality and realpolitik that tend to work at crosspurpose, as Andreas Østhagen lays out. The EU is the international organisation – in fact, it is more than a regular IO, given its common market, energy policy, and foreign policy, among other issues – that has the broadest potential to shape Arctic issues but also the one that is most notably absent. The reason has to do with underlying controversies that Østhagen examines. The key question concerns the extent to which the EU should adopt a normative approach. Some of the EU members, and also the EU

Parliament, with no direct stake in the Arctic are normatively ambitious, seeking to regulate seal trade, delay the exploitation of energy resources, and enlarge the Spitsbergen treaty of scientific cooperation. All these issues have sound moral foundations but upset Arctic stakeholders in one way or another, and not just those within the EU: Canada is watching the EU with a wary eye as well. Paradoxically, given EU pretensions, the biggest source of inflamed political relations and a type of balancing behavior in the Arctic could be the EU itself with its push for a maximalist policy of Arctic protection.

Bent Ole Gram Mortensen investigates the question of Greenland's resources and by implication Greenland's future within the Kingdom of Denmark. Greenland is in a position where it has authority to decide on its own natural resources but it cannot conduct foreign policy nor make immigration and labor law. Greenland is tempted to begin exploiting its potential notably with the aid of Chinese investments, and it is politically ambitious. Outside investment can generate the revenue that is a precondition for enhancing its home rule and ultimately enabling independence, but it is not straightforward. Chinese investments have been slow in coming, and the rush to define a legal framework for large scale investments (bypassing regular Danish labor and immigration law) has grounded to a halt with a change of government in Greenland in March 2013. For now it seems that Denmark and Copenhagen can coordinate their efforts, but in the long run things are less certain. As Bent Ole Gram Mortensen observes, Greenland's political ambitions are strong, and it continues to possess all the potential to become a central pawn in the jockeying among great powers for Arctic influence.

The review of these three issues – China, the EU, and Greenland – causes us to turn finally to underlying military dynamics. Paal Sigurd Hilde reviews the military positioning of the major players as well as their policy doctrines and cautions that there are limits to how bad things can get in this domain. The Arctic is a hostile environment to all human beings operating there, including those in uniform, and it is a simply an oceanic space. The vastest potential for riches, and thus for a military build-up to protect them, lies close to land and thus predominantly within well-defined national territories. Hilde's broad conclusion is that the Arctic as a geopolitical space tends to compel cooperation rather than confrontation. However, Hilde also observers how

political rhetoric is most dynamic, most volatile in three of the littoral countries, Canada, Russia, and Norway, and this to a great extent because of domestic politics. Observers of war and peace will know that war can just as easily follow from political ineptitude as strategic confrontation, and the presence of volatile domestic impulses serves to caution that collective security is not a given. In fact, from a collective defense perspective, there is an argument to be made that the next step for the Arctic security order must be the alignment of concepts of order, an arrangement of power, in an effort to contain domestic impulses.

The full balance sheet is defined and refined in the concluding article. The trend is largely towards cooperation but it is not quite a case of collective security. Likewise, though there are signs of some jockeying and balancing along the lines of collective defense, there is not a strong push in this direction. The key fault line seems to lay between high and low politics, where a continued emphasis on low politics can enable the kind of sub-regional governance that notably Alyson Bailes depicted. However, it presupposes a stable sphere of high politics. The concluding discussion therefore argues that an Artic security order can best emerge from a parallel promotion of both low politics and high political alignment: civil society and private enterprise can establish ties across borders, but statesmen must ensure the convergence of national interests. This is also to say that for now the Arctic security order must be rooted in dynamics of both collective security and collective defence. It may not be conceptually stringent as policy advise, but it reflects the complexity of the issue.

With this final assessment and with this special issue we hope to have laid the foundation for a richer debate on Arctic security. The articles emerged from an Arctic security conference held 5 November 2012 at the University of Southern Denmark. Contributing authors were present and engaged in debate with a group of experts drawn from various backgrounds in academia, policy, and diplomacy. The conference was by invitation only and run according to Chatham House rules, according to which the information received can be used freely as long as it is not attributed. We publish in an appendix a summary of our debate for the sake of presenting the reasoning involved and in the interest of engendering wider debate. The rapporteurs who wrote the summary are Jakob Aarøe Jørgensen and Henrik Lindbo Larsen. The summary is published with the consent of the contributing authors as well as the other conference

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