



ROYAL DANISH DEFENCE COLLEGE

## REPORT

# Russia's Strategy in the Arctic

By Jørgen Staun, Ph.D., Ass. Prof.  
Institute for Strategy, The Royal Danish Defence College  
E-mail: [jstaun@yahoo.dk](mailto:jstaun@yahoo.dk)

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Royal Danish Defence College

Ryvangs Allé 1

DK-2100 Copenhagen

Denmark

Phone: +45 3915 1515

Fax: +45 3929 6172

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## SUMMARY

Russia's strategy in the Arctic is dominated by two overriding discourses – and foreign policy directions – which at first glance may look like opposites. On the one hand, an IR realism/geopolitical discourse that often has a clear patriotic character, dealing with “exploring”, “winning” or “conquering” the Arctic and putting power, including military power, behind the national interests in the area – which is why we, in recent years, have seen an increasing military build-up, also in the Russian Arctic. Opposed to this is an IR liberalism, international law-inspired and modernization-focused discourse, which is characterized by words such as “negotiation”, “cooperation” and “joint ventures” and which has as an axiom that the companies and countries operating in the Arctic all benefit the most if they cooperate peacefully. So far, the IR liberalism discourse has been dominating Russian policy in the Arctic. Thus, it has primarily been the Russian Foreign Ministry and, above all, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that have drawn the overall lines of the Arctic policy, well aided by the Transport Ministry and the Energy Ministry. On the other side are the Russian national Security Council led by Nikolai Patrushev and the Russian Defence Ministry headed by Sergey Shoygu, which both have embedded their visions of Russia and the Arctic in the IR realism/geopolitical discourse. Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, does the same. Nevertheless, he has primarily chosen to let the Foreign Ministry set the line for the chosen Russian Arctic policy, presumably out of a pragmatic acknowledgement of the means that have, so far, served the Russian interests best. Moreover, it is worth noting that both wings, even though they can disagree about the means, in fact are more or less in agreement about the overall goal of Russia's Arctic policy: namely, to utilize the expected wealth of oil and natural gas resources in the underground to ensure the continuation of the restoration of Russia's position as a great power when the capacity of the energy fields in Siberia slowly diminishes – which the Russian Energy Ministry expects to happen sometime between 2015 and 2030. In addition to that, Russia sees – as the polar ice slowly melts – great potential for opening an ice-free northern sea route between Europe and Asia across the Russian Arctic, with the hope that the international shipping industry can see the common sense of saving up to nearly 4,000 nautical miles on a voyage from Ulsan, Korea, to Rotterdam, Holland, so Russia can earn money by servicing the ships and issuing permissions for passage through what Russia regards as Russian territorial water.

The question is whether Russia will be able to realize its ambitious goals. First, the Russian state energy companies Gazprom and Rosneft lack the technology, know-how and experience to extract oil and gas under the exceedingly difficult environment in the Arctic, where the most significant deposits are believed to be in very deep water in areas that are very difficult to access due to bad weather conditions. The Western sanctions mean that the Russian energy companies cannot, as planned, obtain this technology and know-how via the already entered-into partnerships with Western energy companies. The sanctions limit loan opportunities in Western banks, which hit the profitability of the most cost-heavy projects in the Arctic. However, what hits hardest are the low oil prices – at present around 50 dollars per barrel (Brent). According to a study by Marlene Laruelle, which draws upon figures from the International Energy Agency (IEA), the majority of the deposits in the Arctic are not profitable as long as the oil price is under 120 dollars per barrel. Whether Russia chooses to suspend the projects until the energy prices rise again – and until it has again entered into partnerships that can deliver the desired technology and know-how – or whether the Russian state will continuously pump money into the projects is uncertain. The hard-pressed Russian economy, with the prospects of recession, increasing infla-

tion, increasing flight of capital, rising interest rates and a continuously low oil price, provides a market economic incentive for suspending the projects until further notice. Whether the Kremlin will think in a market economic way or a long-term strategic way is uncertain – but, historically, there has been a penchant for the latter.

One of the Kremlin's hopes is that Chinese-Russian cooperation can take over where the Western-Russian cooperation has shut down. Russia has long wanted to diversify its energy markets to reduce its dependence on sales to Europe. At the same time, those in the Kremlin have had a deeply-rooted fear of ending up as a “resource appendix” to the onrushing Chinese economy, which so far has been a strong contributing reason for keeping the Russian-Chinese overtures in check. The question now is whether the Western sanctions can be the catalyst that can make Russia overcome this fear and thus, in the long term, support the efforts to enter into a real, strategic partnership with China.

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## INTRODUCTION

As global warming increases and the polar ice quickly melts, the Arctic region's strategic importance grows. The polar areas become progressively more accessible for the utilization of the expected wealth of natural resources in the underground, and, furthermore, the hope is that they, in the longer term, can function as the transit route for the global ship traffic between Europe and Asia. These circumstances have, in recent years, resulted in renewed political and economic interest in the Arctic, not least from the countries that have coastlines in the area: the USA, Canada, Norway, Denmark (Greenland) and Russia. The interest in this anticipated Arctic bonanza has been so great that, in the eyes of some observers, it resembles the recipe for a new "great game" between the great powers. As one of the most concerned observers, the neorealist Scott Borgerson, expressed it in a 2008 article in *Foreign Affairs*, there is a risk that the increasing competition between the Arctic coastal states will cause the region to become the stage for "armed brinkmanship."<sup>1</sup> Borgerson considers the situation to be "especially dangerous because there are currently no overarching political or legal structures that can provide for the orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreements over Arctic resources or sea-lanes."<sup>2</sup> Thus, Borgerson's concern reflects an underlying fear that IR realism's<sup>3</sup> version of international politics with anarchy and balance of power as the foremost dynamics could come to dominate in the Arctic instead of a more IR liberalism-inspired<sup>4</sup>, institutionalized and regulated division of sea territory, in which the states moderate their claims and conduct in relation to the other states' claims and conduct, the international community's rules and an expectation of achieving a greater absolute benefit by operating in a rule-bound universe. Fortunately, the worry of Borgerson and others has, so far, not materialized. Instead of balance of power and anarchy, the process with regard to the division of the Arctic region into bits of national territory has, so far, been quite peaceful and well-regulated.<sup>5</sup> Despite the increased political rhetoric, Russia has also stayed on the UN track, even though Russia is the only one of the Arctic coastal states having a real military presence and experience with operations in the Arctic. But why do Russian decision-makers speak about the Arctic in strong patriotic terms such as "explore", "winning" and "conquering" when they nevertheless follow a policy that is regulated by UN rules? What does this duality in Russian politics, which is seen not only with regard to the Arctic, but also in other policy areas, for example the relation to the West, reflect? Another question increasingly posed by commentators and researchers is whether the worsening relations between Russia and the West, as a consequence of the war in Ukraine and Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, run the risk of having a spillover effect on development in the Arctic.

In this report, I try to answer the following questions: What is Russia's objective in the Arctic, and what does the Russian Arctic strategy comprise? And does Russia have the means to reach the set objectives? In my attempt to answer these questions, I shall analyse the Russian official and written strategies relevant to the Arctic as well as political statements from relevant persons in the Russian foreign policy establishment and look at what has been done so far. But since the Arctic policy is not formulated in a political vacuum, but is affected by what the foreign policy establishment's conception of what Russia generally is, wants to be and will be in the world, I shall first go through the main features of what I consider to be the predominant foreign policy school in Russia, the so-called great power normalizers – the group of Russian observers, politicians and practitioners who favour Russia's return to being a normal great power in its own right.

Furthermore, within this discussion, there is a discussion of who the essential players are with regard to Russian foreign and security policy, and how policy comes into being in today's Russia.<sup>6</sup>

### **The resources in the Arctic**

First, an overview of what it all revolves around, namely the resources in the Arctic. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)<sup>7</sup> estimated in 2008 that the Arctic<sup>8</sup> is the location of more than 30 percent of the world's remaining natural gas resources: 1.7 trillion cubic metres of natural gas and 44 billion barrels of liquid natural gas. In addition to this, it has 13 percent of the known remaining oil resources, upwards of 90 billion barrels of oil. Nearly all of that (84 percent) is estimated to be offshore.<sup>9</sup> According to the USGS, 60 percent of the undiscovered oil in the Arctic is in Russian territory, which corresponds to 412 billion barrels of oil.<sup>10</sup> According to Russian sources, up to 90 percent of the hydrocarbon reserves are located in the Siberian continental shelf in the Arctic zone with 67 percent in the western part of the Arctic, in the Barents Sea and in the Kara Sea. And according to Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, "the overall energy reserves in the Russian Arctic area exceed 1.6 trillion tonnes."<sup>11</sup> The bulk of the known reserves are estimated to be within the Russian 200-mile territorial sea boundary. But it is also estimated that there are substantial deposits inside the expanded 350-mile sea boundary, which Russia can claim if the country can convince the UN's Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS)<sup>12</sup> – based on provisions in the UN's Convention on the Law of the Seas – that the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges are an extension of the Siberian continental shelf. Already, it is estimated that around 20 percent of Russia's gross domestic product and 22 percent of Russia's exports are to be generated in the Arctic areas.<sup>13</sup>

Beyond the hydrocarbon reserves, the Arctic region is rich in timber, fish – the fishery in the area makes up 10 percent of the world's total catch – and minerals. In 2005, the USGS thus estimated that the coal reserves in Alaska make up nearly 10 percent of the world's known reserves and that the Arctic subsurface contains large quantities of chromium, cobalt, copper, gold, iron, lead, magnesium, manganese, nickel, platinum, silver, tin, titanium, tungsten and zinc.<sup>14</sup> However, not everyone joins in with the growing idea of an Arctic bonanza. As the long-time Russia expert Marlene Laruelle points out, the presence of resources in the subsurface is not necessarily synonymous with reserves that can be utilized for the simple reason that they may be technically inaccessible, just as they may be commercially unprofitable. In addition to that, expected reserves are not the same as documented reserves.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Russia expert Pavel K. Baev points out that neither Gazprom nor Rosneft – which are the only two Russian energy concerns that, according to Russian law, have the right to extract gas and oil from the continental shelf – are swept away by the prospect of a "feverish 'battle for resources'". In his eyes, the companies show no interest in exploring for oil or gas in the Eastern Siberian Sea or the Chukotka Sea.<sup>16</sup> Instead, the companies have displayed estimates for the enormous costs of the development of resources in the inhospitable Arctic territory. Thus, Rosneft's former CEO Sergey Bogdanchikov estimated that it would cost 61.6 trillion roubles until 2050 to develop the fields on Russia's continental shelf within the existing limits.<sup>17</sup> Igor Sechin, who is now president as well as chairman of the management board at Rosneft, has yet announced that the company anticipates investing 400 billion dollars in projects in the Arctic until 2030. Sechin particularly expects much from the drilling in the Kara Sea, which he believes in and which itself contains "reserves comparable to proven reserves of Saudi Arabia."<sup>18</sup>

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## **RUSSIA'S TWO POLITICAL TRACKS WITH REGARD TO THE ARCTIC**

Russia's political debate about the Arctic bears the characteristics of the basic assumptions from two theoretical schools of thought within international relations (IR). On the one hand, there is an IR realism or geopolitical track, which is strongly patriotic and partially coloured by romantic nationalist rhetoric, which deals with Russia's solitary approach and Russian balance of power and is permeated with notions such as "conquest", "exploring", "Russia's greatness", "struggle" and "sovereignty". This side of the debate is supported by official announcements and demands for an increased Russian military build-up in the Arctic and, if the Arctic is mentioned in connection with a discussion of relations with the West, often framed by anti-Western rhetoric, anxiety about isolation and disappointment about the lack of recognition of the (desired) Russian status as a great power. On the other hand, there is an IR liberalism track, which aspires to accommodate to international law and negotiation, resulting from a desire for market economic modernization and optimization of Russia and Russian companies – including emphasis on involvement of international (Western) companies with technology and know-how with regard to developing the hard-to-access resources in the Arctic. Here the language used is far more technocratic and mercantile in style with Dmitry Medvedev's modernization strategy<sup>19</sup>, and it emphasizes the importance of terms such as "scientific", "research" and "innovation" in a number of references to international law rules such as UNCLOS, etc. as well as a number of joint effort and cooperative expressions, e.g. "joint venture", "public-private partnerships", "cooperation" and "productive cooperation".<sup>20</sup>

As far as the IR realism/geopolitical and patriotic track is concerned, in 2007, Russia, with great media attention, sent out a private, mainly Swedish-sponsored Arctic expedition including, amongst others, Artur Chilingarov, who is a polar researcher, former vice chairman of the Russian State Duma and Putin's special representative for the Arctic, to the North Pole, where the expedition planted a Russian flag made of titanium on the sea floor to mark that it was Russian territory. It was a media event that, to a degree, addressed the patriotic circles in Russia and stirred up memories of historic explorers' voyages in the nation's service, of which Russia's history is so rich.<sup>21</sup> The feat was duly rewarded by Putin, who named Chilingarov a Hero of the Russian Federation. Chilingarov repaid the compliment by underscoring the expedition's patriotic spirit when he declared to the media, "Russia stopped its activities in the Arctic in the '90s due to the break-up of the Soviet Union, but after this 13-year absence we have returned to the Arctic. And strictly speaking, we will never really leave the Arctic anymore. Historically speaking, it is Russian territorial waters and islands. Now we are recovering it."<sup>22</sup> The patriotic pride is even more evident in the nationalist Artur Indzhiev's book from 2010, *The Battle for the Arctic: Will the North Be Russian?* According to Indzhiev, in light of an incipient third world war, a weakened Russia is compelled to show its heroic nature to preserve its rights in the Arctic in the fight against an aggressive West.<sup>23</sup> For Aleksandr Bobdunov, former leader of the Eurasian Youth Union, patriotism even has a spiritual aspect. For Bobdunov, the Arctic is thus "not only a base of economic resources, our future in the material sense, but also a territory of the spirit, of heroism, of overcoming, a symbolic resource of central importance for the future of our country."<sup>24</sup> As Andrey Kolesnikov, a well-known Russian journalist and columnist whom Putin is said to read frequently, expressed it in connection with the flag-planting, it was something close to a "polar war" that played itself out in the Arctic.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, the planting of the flag was not well received outside of Russia. The Canadian foreign minister, Peter MacKay, dismissed the event as “a Russian show” and declared, “This isn’t the 15th century. You can’t go around the world and just plant flags and say ‘We’re claiming this territory.’”<sup>26</sup> It is not necessarily viewed like that in the IR realism/geopolitical inspired part of the Russian foreign policy establishment in Moscow. There, the use of power is not ruled out if it is necessary, and that also applies to the Arctic. That has even been embodied in the 2009 national security strategy until 2020: “Under conditions of competition for resources, it is not excluded that arising problems may be resolved using military force....”<sup>27</sup> During a meeting with the Defence Ministry’s leadership on 27 February 2013, thus only a week after the adoption of the updated 2013 Arctic strategy, Putin compared threats in the Arctic with more traditional threats against Russia’s national security. Thus, he stressed that “methodical efforts to undermine the strategic balance are being made” and that “the possibilities for the further expansion of NATO to the East are being explored; and there is a danger of the militarization of the Arctic.”<sup>28</sup> In a speech to the Russian Defence Ministry in December 2013, Putin implored the assembled chiefs to “pay special attention to the deployment of infrastructure and military units in the Arctic” because “Russia is actively exploring this promising region, returning to it, and should use all possible channels to protect its security and national interests.”<sup>29</sup> In a speech at the Seliger 2014 National Youth Forum for young Putin supporters, Putin reminded the listeners that the “United States’ attack submarines are concentrated in that area, not far from the Norwegian coast, and the missiles they carry would reach Moscow within 15-16 minutes, just to remind you. But we have our navy there and quite a big part of our submarine fleet.”<sup>30</sup> As Baev expresses it, Putin’s interest in geopolitics in the Arctic has “a pronounced military-security character”.<sup>31</sup>

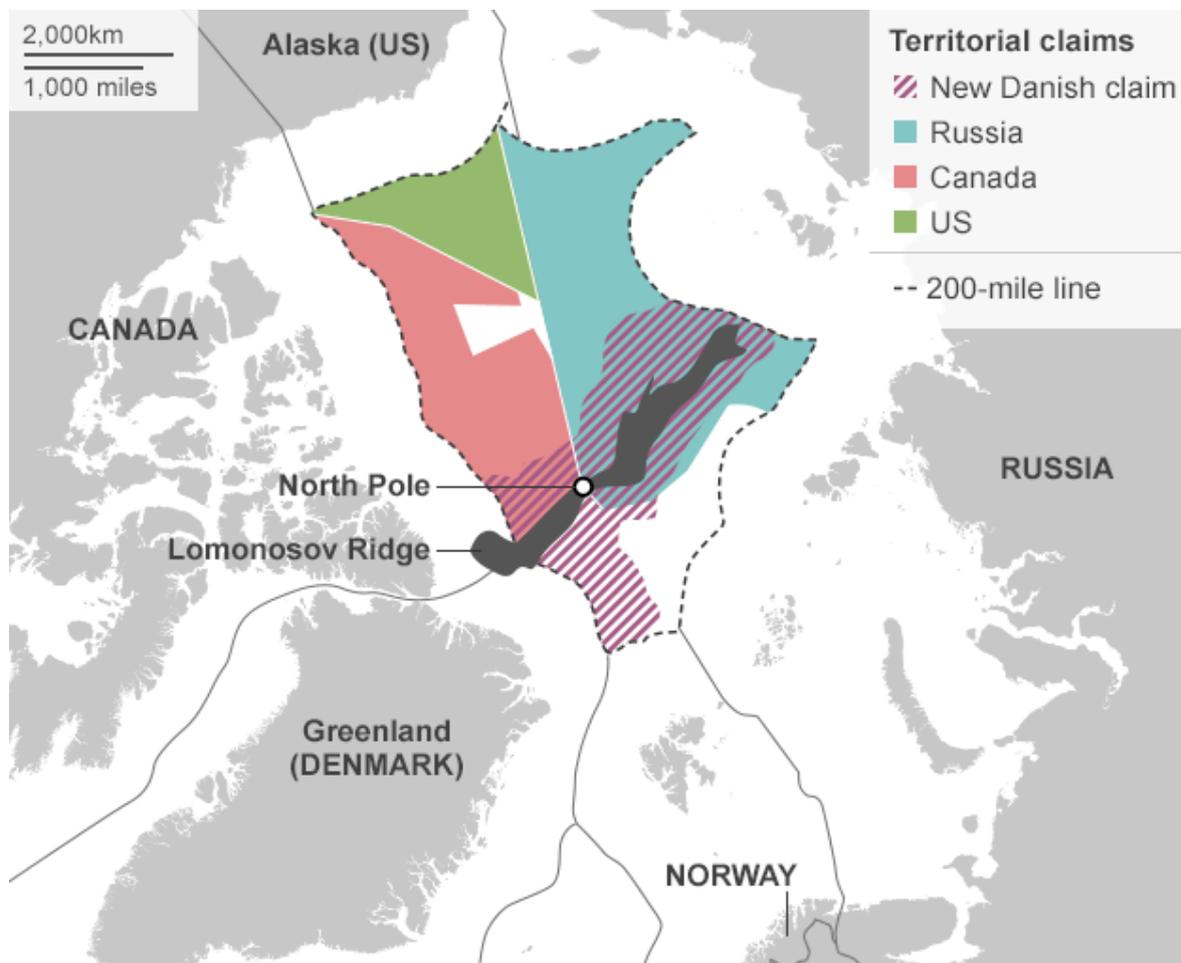
In contrast to the patriotic line in connection with the flag-planting in the Arctic in 2007, which many in the West interpreted as evidence of Russia’s renewed, quasi-imperial realpolitik, stands the more IR liberalism-oriented track, which is a more rule-bound, international law process, which Russia has de facto followed when it comes to the Arctic, with regard to the demarcation of the undersea territory. Thus, Russia has not chosen to pursue the Soviet maximalist demands of past times. The Soviet era’s map of the Arctic, for example, showed the Soviet Union’s northern boundary as a line along 32 degrees East longitude from the Kola Peninsula and 180 degrees East longitude from the Bering Strait towards the North Pole, which indicated that approximately a third of the Arctic Ocean was looked upon as being Soviet territorial waters.<sup>32</sup> Instead, Russian leaders have chosen to moderate their requests to what, according to UNCLOS, is possible, and they otherwise follow the practice of CLCS, including the procedure for legitimately making claims on territory beyond the 200-mile sea limit. Russia also chose to support the Danish initiative in the Ilulissat Declaration from 2008, in which the co-signatories commit themselves to abide by the provisions of UNCLOS and CLCS.<sup>33</sup> In addition to that, in 2010, Russia chose – after more than 40 years of standstill in the negotiations – to enter into an agreement with Norway over the delineation of the border in the Barents Sea, in which Norway and Russia have divided the area equitably between them “in two parts of approximately the same size”.<sup>34</sup> Even though the agreement was not particularly popular in Russia – Vladimir Zhirinovskiy asked rhetorically whether Russia had “lost a battle in the war against Norway”,<sup>35</sup> Putin officially distanced himself from the agreement,<sup>36</sup> and, in the Russian media, it has since been debated what Putin can do to “get the Barents Sea back”<sup>37</sup> – Medvedev, during a visit in Oslo in April 2010, chose to announce the compromise. That can be seen as evidence that, in any case, a part of the foreign policy

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establishment in Moscow perceives that Russia, too, can have a clear interest in being a party to a well-ordered course of negotiations that result in peaceful settlement of disagreements. Today, Putin himself supports a process that is bound to the UNCLOS and the Arctic Council: "I would like to stress that this country is interested in the region's sustainable development based on cooperation and absolute respect of international law.... Within the framework of the Arctic Council, we resolve issues pertaining to cooperation in border areas, maritime transportation ...."<sup>38</sup> And even though the foreign policy concept from 2013 mentions scarcity of essential resources as a potential threat, that threat is far down on the list of potential transnational threats. The document stresses, above all, "practical cooperation with Northern European countries" and development of "joint cooperation projects" for the Barents Sea and Euro-Arctic Region within "multilateral structures".<sup>39</sup> Thus, it is underscored that Russia believes that the "existing international legal framework is sufficient to successfully settle all regional issues through negotiations, including the issue of defining the external boundaries of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean."<sup>40</sup> At the same time, it stresses that it is Russian policy to strengthen the "strategic partnership with major producers of energy."<sup>41</sup> Cooperation is also emphasized in Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's speeches. Thus, in a speech at an Arctic Council meeting in Kiruna on 15 May 2013, he stressed that he "with satisfaction" could note that all of the Arctic coastal states' Arctic strategies that are anchored in the Arctic Council "may be fully secured only through close cooperation with partners in the region." Further, he underscored the Russian view that all of the topics and questions with regard to the Arctic region that are not yet handled "will be resolved by the Arctic countries based on the existing and rather sufficient international and legal basis and, of course, good will."<sup>42</sup> That corresponds well with the evaluation from Elana Wilson Rowe and Helge Blakkisrud, who have examined, in all, 323 articles about the Arctic in the government newspaper *Rossiskaya Gazeta* in the period from May 2008 to June 2011. Their observation is that "in our material, Lavrov has consistently argued that all problems in the Arctic can be solved peacefully and without a 'confrontational approach'".<sup>43</sup> One can find the same stress on international law in the communication from the Russian Transport Ministry, for example in a feature article in *Arctic Info*, in which Deputy Transport Minister Sergey Aristov repeatedly refers to UNCLOS in connection with the argumentation for why the ministry considers the northern sea route to be Russian territorial water.<sup>44</sup>

One reason for the IR liberalist rhetoric and the choice of the UN track is obviously that Russia, in doing so, hopes to secure support from the other Arctic coastal states regarding UNCLOS's recognition of Russia's request for a 350-mile sea limit. Russia had planned to submit a new application to CLCS in 2010, but that has been put off until the beginning of 2015.<sup>45</sup> After an expedition in 2012, the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment declared that samples had been collected from the sea floor by the Mendeleev ridge and that the samples supported the Russia claim. When the Russians have waited so long to submit a new application, it can be due to a desire to minimize the risk of rejection. In this process, Russia has tried to coordinate its claims with Canada – and, with lesser success, with Denmark/Greenland – and has resolved its territorial dispute with Norway. Thus, the expected Russian claim on the expanded sea territory overlaps with Danish (Greenlandic), Canadian and American claims to the same territory. Some of the Russian territorial claims also involve the North Pole, which has great symbolic value. Not least on the Danish side, one can expect to meet up with Russian opposition, since the Danish application to CLCS includes the whole area from Greenland's north coast, under the North Pole and up to Russia's 200-mile sea limit. The Danish claim thus markedly overlaps with the Russian

claim. Thus, the Danish government claims to be able to demonstrate that “Greenland’s subsurface is an extension of the submerged seamount, the Lomonosov ridge, which stretches through the Arctic Ocean to Russia, and that Rigsfællesskabet (the federation of Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, ed.) can scientifically argue for the Danish claim.”<sup>46</sup> Oppositely, Russia believes it can prove that the Lomonosov ridge is an extension of the Siberian continental shelf. But it should be pointed out that Russia, in the application to CLCS, has limited its own claims to the area between the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges up to, but not across, the North Pole, which would otherwise be possible. Contrary to Denmark, the Russians have thus chosen not to maximize their claims, but instead apply for recognition of the areas they presume they are able to get confirmed through the subsequent bilateral negotiations with the other Arctic coastal states.



Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30481309>.

UNCLOS, of which Russia is a co-signatory<sup>47</sup> – in contrast to the USA, where the Senate for many years has declined to ratify the treaty with reference to restrictions on the USA’s sovereignty – thus allows countries to claim an exclusive economic zone up to 200 miles out from the coast-line (Article 57), which is why there can be claims on large areas of the Arctic territorial waters

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from more than one land. UNCLOS furthermore gives states exclusive rights to extract mineral resources on their continental shelf up to 350 miles out from their coastline (Article 76), if they can prove to CLCS that they have a so-called broad continental shelf.<sup>48</sup> If CLCS thus accepts a country's claim as legitimate, CLCS consequently issues a recommendation, which is "final and binding" for the coastal state.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, CLCS's "final and binding" lines of direction must, of course, be followed by the states. And, in the case of overlapping claims, the states must either enter into a cooperative agreement or, so to speak, fight for their rights. Russia asserts that the submerged Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges, which reach the North Pole, are extensions of the country's continental shelf and that Russia can therefore make claims on the areas up to 350 miles from the country's coastline.<sup>50</sup> But to have that claim affirmed, Russia must accordingly enter into an agreement with the USA, Canada and Denmark, which are also making claims on parts of the same territory, which obviously partly explains why Russia follows the UN track. And, as Rear Admiral Nils Christian Wang states it<sup>51</sup>, the huge, and very long-term, investments that are needed to be able to develop the expected resources in the Arctic mean that Russia, too, has a need for long-term stability in the Arctic if the energy dream is to become reality. In addition to that, an institutional change within Russian politics may explain the chosen Russian policy line: Thus, the Russia scholar Kristian Åtland emphasizes that whereas "Russia's Arctic policy in the past was governed by national security interests, it is now increasingly governed by national economic interests and by the interests of companies closely associated with the Russian state."<sup>52</sup> So far, it appears that the IR liberalism strategy with regard to recognition of Russian claims to the territorial sea is bearing fruit. Thus, on 22 April 2014, Putin could announce that CLCS had recommended that Russia had obtained the right to a 52,000 square kilometre area in the Sea of Okhotsk in the western Pacific Ocean between the Kurils and the Kamchatka Peninsula. The recommendation from Putin was absolutely clear: "Our experts should act in the exact same way while conducting bilateral and multilateral consultations with the governments of the Arctic nations."<sup>53</sup>

## **RUSSIA'S OVERALL FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY**

Russia's strategy for the Arctic is formulated within the frameworks of the predominant foreign and security policy thinking in Moscow. Thus, the ambitions in the Arctic do not stand alone, but form part of Russia's general foreign and security policy, which are coloured by the political system Putin has built up since his assumption of power. Thus, the thesis followed here is that a country's foreign policy is formed to a high degree by the country's political system, in modern times particularly the distinction democracy-authoritarianism. As the scholar Thomas Ambrosio has presented in a convincing manner, there is a clear correlation between Russia's increasingly authoritarian political system at home and the country's foreign policy. That applies not least to the foreign policy line in relation to the coloured (democratic) revolutions in the post-Soviet area, to which, increasingly, authoritarian Russia is particularly sensitive.<sup>54</sup>

In the meantime, Putin's regime is not a static system, but has developed – and constantly develops – as a result of the internal power struggles by which the Kremlin has been characterized through the years and still is. In the first years of Putin's first presidential term, the circle was still under the influence of powerful former Yeltsin people with a more liberal-technocratic perspective, for example Putin's first prime minister, Mikhail Kasyanov (May 2000 to February 2004), and Alexander Voloshin, who was appointed chief of staff by Boris Yeltsin in 1997 and who worked for Putin until October 2003, when he resigned due to the Yukos case.<sup>55</sup> In addition,

there was a team of liberal economists who Putin himself brought into the presidency and who have a big part of the credit for the Russian course of liberal reform, which, together with the run-up of the oil price at the start of the 2000s, put Russia on a solid economic course again after the turbulent 1990s – first and foremost, Putin’s long-time finance minister, Alexei Kudrin (May 2000 to September 2011), and former Minister of Economic Development German Gref (May 2000 to September 2007).

In the meantime, as early as 2003, a shift in the internal division of power in the Kremlin took place in favour of the so-called “siloviki”, people with backgrounds in the defence and security services – in relation to the liberal technocrats. This became evident, if not before then, in connection with the Yukos case. With them, the siloviki brought a world view and a view of foreign policy that involve a number of conflicting interests with the West. According to Olga Kryshtanovskaya and Stephen White, the siloviki’s national project, a little sharply summed up, can be defined as “patriotism; anti-Westernism; imperialism; Orthodox clericalism; militarism; authoritarianism; cultural uniformity; xenophobia; economic dirigisme; and demographic pessimism.”<sup>56</sup> Power is understood first and foremost as relational; one focuses on balance of power and national interests. The siloviki thus understand international politics in classic realism or in neo-realism terms<sup>57</sup> or in decidedly geopolitical zero-sum terms.<sup>58</sup> That, to a high degree, also applies to Putin himself. Robert Legvold thus believes that Putin’s view of international politics reflects a “Hobbesian view of the world”, and Alfred B. Evans, Jr. points out that continuous statements from Putin support the impression that he sees the world Russia exists in as dangerous as a consequence of a merciless fight for life.<sup>59</sup> The siloviki wing works for a foreign policy to make Russia a great power with a strong state that can re-establish Russia’s greatness internationally and in the region. And, not unimportantly, the thinking is, as mentioned, in geopolitical zero-sum terms on a large scale. To support the ambition for playing a larger role on the international stage, the Kremlin, in 2003-2004<sup>60</sup>, changed its hitherto liberal economic course in the energy area in order to ensure the greatest possible state control of the sector, which, from then on, has become viewed as strategic. The aim was to guarantee the greatest possible foreign policy influence and, the critics claim, ensure the siloviki wing in the Kremlin a private economic advantage.<sup>61</sup> This course is still followed and, for Russia’s Arctic policy, it means that only energy companies in which the Russian state owns or controls more than 50 percent of the shares are allowed to operate and extract gas and oil in the Arctic area.<sup>62</sup> In other words, only Gazprom (mainly gas) and Rosneft (mainly oil). This policy has been under hard pressure from the private Russian energy companies, supported by Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich and by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment – which, for a period, held up the issuance of licences to Gazprom and Rosneft. Thus, in April 2012, the chiefs of Lukoil (Vagit Alekperov), Surgutneftegas (Vladimir Bogdanov), Bashneft (Alexander Korsik) and TNK-BP (German Khan) wrote Putin a letter, in which they called on him to provide opportunities for issuing drilling licences in the Arctic to non-state energy companies. That, however, met with hard resistance from Rosneft (Sechin) and Gazprom (Alexey Miller), which argued that it would be risky, considering the Arctic’s strategic importance. Subsequently, Putin personally rejected the demand for reform and ordered the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to give “without delay” the state energy companies the licences they needed.<sup>63</sup> One of the explanations may, in all probability, be found in the tightening of the circle around Putin that has taken place in recent years. Sechin belongs to this

limited circle, and Miller – who finds himself on the fringe of the inner circle – has, via Sechin, secured privileged access to it, at least in regard to Arctic policy.

### **Putin's court**

According to Ben Judah, who has done an extensive study of Russia under Putin, the Putin regime today is more reminiscent of a royal court than a government: "Putin's Kremlin has more in common with the court of Elizabeth I than the Politburo during 'stagnation'". At the court of Elizabeth I, there was a "constant jostling between 'factions' and favourites. These factions had some idealistic tints but cannot be compared to twentieth century 'believers'. Elizabethan factions were loose and informal groupings, friends and networks, competing above all for patronage and power for its own sake."<sup>64</sup> Thus, Judah emphasizes that the Kremlin is not divided into economic liberal reformers (liberals) and conservative controllers (siloviki), as Western ambassadors and think tanks are fond of describing it.<sup>65</sup> Instead, he stresses that there are nothing but ideological nuances amongst the Kremlin's many factions, whose members are more determined by when and under what circumstances single individuals or groups of individuals have been friends or colleagues with or in another way in touch with Putin.<sup>66</sup> Thus, one can presumably perceive the way policy, including the foreign and security policy, comes into being in Russia as a type of de-institutionalized 'bureaucratic politics' model.<sup>67</sup> This means that the all-pervading personification and deinstitutionalization of the politics in Putin's Russia makes it such that it is not, as a matter of course, that a minister in charge or a high-ranking representative for the ministry in charge sits in at the table during important negotiations inside the ministry's jurisdiction – that depends entirely on the minister's access to Putin and the tight circle around him. Nor is it a matter of course that foreign policy proposals are formulated so that they are in the nation's interest, understood as the common interest. Often private economic considerations of the elite also come into play in connection with the formulation or emphasis of the national interests.<sup>68</sup>

Contrary to Judah's point about the missing fundamental ideological difference between the various factions in the Kremlin, I have nevertheless chosen to stick to the terms siloviki versus liberal technocrats. This is done partly out of consideration for clarity – it is easier to see the differences when one draws up the contours. But it is also done because, even though the siloviki and liberal technocrats (and the other wings in the Kremlin) may perhaps actually agree about the overriding goal – that Russia must again be a great power that is taken seriously on the international stage – they are not in agreement about the means to reach that goal. That is not least obvious with regard to foreign policy, including Arctic policy.

Russian's foreign policy is, to a great degree, a matter for the tsar, now the president. Historically speaking, the Soviet foreign policy, for long periods, also bore the mark of strong individuals: Vladimir Lenin, Josef Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev and Mikhail Gorbachev. According to Valentin Falin, former secretary of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee, all of the important decisions concerning German reunification in 1989-1990 were handled personally by Gorbachev, advised by Anatoly Chernyaev and Georgy Shakhnazarov. Neither the Central Committee nor Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze took part in the consultations.<sup>69</sup> That is also way it is with foreign policy under Putin. According to Dmitri Trenin and Bobo Lo, Putin is extremely autocratic with regard to foreign policy and does not have a real foreign policy adviser, but is advi-

sed instead by the usual circle of political insiders, thus the advisers in the president's administration, including the national Security Council, on the basis of information provided by the domestic intelligence service (FSB), the foreign intelligence service (SVR) and the military intelligence service (GRU). As Lilia Shevtsova states, it is "typically a little, hermetically sealed circle of people, who are completely close to Putin and are therefore very loyal to him" who help reach important decisions.<sup>70</sup> This tendency has intensified in recent years. Thus, Judah's – and others' – descriptions of Putin's compartmentalized daily work life, which is divided into "thousands of units of 15 minutes and planned for months, if not years ahead"<sup>71</sup>, give evidence of a president who is increasingly isolated from critical or different (ordinary) parts of the outside world. Both of his parents are dead, he is divorced from his wife, Lyudmila Putina, and his daughter lives in Western Europe. He most often meets with bowing and scraping, yes-saying bureaucrats and is hung up in pedantic formalities and presidential protocol. He more and more rarely comes to the Kremlin in Moscow, which he detests with all of its noise and pollution, but stays at his Novo Ogaryovo palace by the Rublevka highway west of Moscow when he is not on his extensive trips out of town or out of the country. He surrounds himself with his old friends from St. Petersburg and the KGB years because he trusts them. They are also drawn in when foreign policy decisions must be made. In connection with the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, Valery Solovei, Russian historian and commentator and former professor at Moscow's State University, on 3 March 2014 wrote on his Facebook profile that "well-informed sources" have told him that Putin personally made the decision to go into Crimea, advised by a very little band of five-six senior government officials.<sup>72</sup> According to a radio interview with Mark Galeotti and Judah<sup>73</sup> the inner circle up to and after the annexation of Crimea is made up of Putin's old friend and faithful follower, the ex-KGB man Sechin; the chief of Russian Railways, Vladimir Yakunin; former Defence Minister and current chief of the presidential administration Sergey Ivanov; the chief of the federal anti-narcotics bureau, Viktor Ivanov; chief of the national Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev; chairman of the board of Bank Rossiya, Yuri Kovalchuk; Putin's old friend and judo trainer Arkady Rotenberg; and the chief of FSB, Alexander Bortnikov. In addition, Putin has frequent meetings with the Kremlin's court propagandist, the chief of the Kremlin's new news organization Rossiya Segodnya, Dmitry Kiselyov, and with the military chiefs in the General Staff, including the chief of the General Staff, Valeriy Gerasimov. According to Judah, it is therefore noteworthy that none of the old liberal technocratic forces such as Kudrin or Gref has been a part of the inner circle since the annexation of Crimea, indeed, not even Prime Minister Medvedev.

With regard to the formulation of the overall lines of Russia's Arctic policy that dates back to 2007-2008, Baev points out Patrushev<sup>74</sup> and current Defence Minister Sergey Shoygu as the persons – and the Security Council as the institution – that have had the greatest influence on the formulation of the Arctic strategy. Patrushev, together with the then-Minister of Emergency Situations Shoygu, convinced Putin of the importance of the Arctic, says Baev.<sup>75</sup> In addition, it is obvious that Foreign Minister Lavrov has outlined a large part of the Russian policy regarding the Arctic. There is some indication that Genady Timchenko must also be considered as an increasingly important player with regard to the Arctic.<sup>76</sup> Thus, Gazprom's monopoly on the export of natural gas was partially

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challenged when Putin, on 2 December 2013, signed a new law that partially liberalized the export of LNG gas. The law, which Rosneft (where Sechin is chief) and Novatek (where Timchenko is chief and owns 23 percent of the shares)<sup>77</sup> lobbied for, gave the right to export LNG gas to the “companies whose licences were filed prior to 1 January 2013 and included construction of the LNG plant, as well as to state-owned companies working on the shelf” – therefore Rosneft and Novatek, in addition to Gazprom.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, Rowe and Blakkisrud point out that, where the Foreign Ministry and the presidential administration were the dominant voices in connection with the Arctic debate in 2008 and 2009, the field of debaters in the period following became somewhat larger, which is why a number of ministers and state representatives took part in the debate about the Arctic, for example the chief of the Border Guard Service, General Vladimir Pronichev, Putin’s special Arctic representative Chilingarov, and the director of the Institute of Strategic Studies and Analysis, Vagif Guseinov.<sup>79</sup> However, in my analysis, I have not been able to ascertain appreciable influence on the two main discourses from these more peripheral players. One reason can be that Rowe and Blakkisrud’s study was concluded in mid-2013, which is why the increased centralization of the important political decisions as a consequence of the war in Ukraine, which Judah, Galeotti and Shevtsova note, is not in their analysis. The question is whether this centralization of important political decisions also applies to the Arctic policy and how long the crisis atmosphere the Ukraine war has created will last. With regard to the first question, Rowe and Blakkisrud maintain that the Arctic policy is “somewhat insulted from the ups and downs” that the relationship between Russia and the West is exposed to – primarily because all of the players in the Arctic, even Russia, make sure it is like that: the Arctic is “successfully ‘branded’ as a zone of peace and cooperation in the diplomatic framing of the region.”<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, Michael L. Roi argues that “Russia’s behaviour in the Arctic over the next decade and beyond will be shaped by its great power aspirations, its relationship with other great powers both in the Arctic and outside of it.”<sup>81</sup> Even though the Arctic has a good and reliable brand as a zone characterized by peace and cooperation, the area is thus, in the longer view, not immune to a worsening of the relations between Russia and the West. The question is, then, whether the narrowing down of the circle of persons we have seen up to and during the war in Ukraine is of temporary or more permanent character as a consequence of the Putin regime’s increasing authoritarianism. The narrowing of the circle of persons around Putin has ensured the siloviki wing’s ideological interests in keeping the strategic sectors, including the energy sector, under state control and/or ownership. In addition to that, the politics have apparently ensured the inner circle’s own or institutional economic interests. Thus, Sechin (Rosneft) and Miller (Gazprom) have precluded private energy companies from extracting energy in the Arctic. At the same time, permission has been given so that Rosneft (Sechin), Gazprom (Miller) and Novatek (Timchenko) can export LNG gas from plants in the Arctic, whereby the interests of three central players/institutions are guaranteed.

### **Great power normalization – neo-imperialism**

Following the attempts above to outline the contours of the circle of persons and institutions that belong to the foreign policy establishment, including those that have influence in the Arctic, we now turn towards a discussion of the foreign policy goals this circle has enumerated and some of the central terms that are used in the debate. From 2005-2006, after a number of years with

strong economic growth yielded from the rise of energy prices, liberal reforms and a tight finance and monetary policy, there arose in Russian political circles a feeling that “we are back”. As a great power, mind you. Not without reason, one must say, since Russia in that period had had an economic growth of 5-8 percent of gross domestic product annually, while the USA was on the verge of ‘imperial overstretch’ with difficult wars in Iraq and Afghanistan concurrent with the beginning financial crisis. Gone was the 1990s’ talk of Russia’s impending economic collapse and national disintegration. Moscow signalled repeatedly that it wanted greater influence on the decisions in the international system and that it would no longer accept just being regarded as the West’s junior partner, as was the case under Yeltsin in the 1990s. That was most pronounced in the so-called Munich speech in 2007, when Putin spoke bluntly and, on the rhetorical level, heralded a strategic shift opposite the West – from quiet, more or less diplomatically uttered dissatisfaction in the corridors to direct confrontation in front of an open microphone.<sup>82</sup>

The leading foreign policy thinking from the end of Putin’s first presidential term can thus be categorized as great power normalization or neo-imperialism – which fundamentally is a limited revisionist position suggesting that Russia works for a new world order that, to a lesser extent than now, is characterized by the West’s, particularly the USA’s, dominating position and ideas and that guarantees Russia influence as one of the poles in the world.<sup>83</sup> Thus, first – and most importantly – in Russian foreign policy thinking, the objective is that the international system should not be dominated by the superpower USA, but should instead be a multipolar system, in which regional great powers such as China, India, Brazil – and Russia – have their own spheres of influence, with which the USA and EU must not interfere. To the objective of a multipolar system is attached a clear expectation that Russia will again enter into the role of a great power in its own right and is internationally recognized as such. Thus, the idea that Russia must be a great power and that the country is nothing other than that is a central and permanent element in the Russian political self-understanding:<sup>84</sup> “Russia can (...) exist within its present boundaries only as one of the world’s leading states”, as Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov expressed it in 2007.<sup>85</sup> Or as Putin formulated it in his Munich speech in 2007, “Russia is a country with a history that spans more than a thousand years and has practically always used the privilege to carry out an independent foreign policy. We are not going to change this tradition today.”<sup>86</sup> In Putin’s so-called manifesto, which was published in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* on 30 December 1999, the day before he was named as acting president by the departing Yeltsin, the great power dream is more distinct – even though, at that time, it still lay further out into the future: “Russia was and will remain a power. It is preconditioned by the inseparable characteristics of its geopolitical, economic and cultural existence. They determined the mentality of Russians and the policy of the government throughout the history of Russia and they cannot but do so at present.”<sup>87</sup>

The desire to be a great power also figures into Russia’s foreign policy concept as an established part of the foreign policy goal-setting. In 2000, Russia is thus mentioned directly as a “great power, as one of the most influential centres of the modern world.”<sup>88</sup> In the 2008 concept, the great power feeling should, on top of that, have consequences for the foreign policy that is demanded to be reformed. Here, Russia is namely mentioned as “one of the most influential centres in the modern world”, whose “increased role” in international affairs and “greater responsibility for global developments” make it necessary to engage in “rethinking of the priorities of the Russian

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foreign policy.”<sup>89</sup> In the introduction to Russia’s 2009 national security strategy until 2020, the great power dream is present to a greater degree, somewhat like the “we are back” feeling:

“Russia has overcome the consequences of the systemic political and the socio-economic crisis at the end of the 20th century – having stopped the decline in the quality of life of Russian citizens; withstood the pressures of nationalism, separatism and international terrorism; prevented the discreditation of the constitutional form of government; preserved its sovereignty and territorial integrity and restored the country’s potential to enhance its competitiveness and defend its national interests as a key player within evolving multipolar international relations.” With these grand achievements in the luggage, it is logical to go a step further. Thus, it is not enough to be a (regional) great power; now the country will also be a “world power”. In section 21 the goal of “transforming Russia into a world power” is defined as a long-range national interest.<sup>90</sup>

The great power role and the ambition to play a decisive role on the international stage – and the attainment of the matching respect and recognition from the other great powers – are, in other words, entirely central identity markers in Russian self-understanding from which the Russian national interests in the foreign policy area are derived. And if Russia should have a place as a great power in the international system, the near-unipolar status the USA has had since the fall of the Wall must be diminished. As a minimum, the USA’s influence must be minimized in the Eurasian region and kept at an acceptable level in the regions that border the Eurasian region. When the Russian troops went into Georgia in 2008, they did it, according to then-President Medvedev, because “We simply want respect, respect for our country, our people and our values.”<sup>91</sup> As Medvedev expressed it, Russia shall “not allow anyone to compromise the lives and dignity of its citizens, Russia is a nation, which will continue to be reckoned with.”<sup>92</sup> Embedded in the multipolar vision is, moreover, a regionalization idea that, to a certain extent, resembles the German right-wing radical philosopher Carl Schmitt’s idea about regions as great power space where a prohibition against intervention by other great powers prevails.<sup>93</sup> The regionalization idea thus dictates that the poles dominate in their own region, especially with regard to something as fundamental as the choice of political system. Russia wants leave to choose its own way, including its own authoritarian form of government.

### **Fear of encirclement – containment**

In addition to the great power dream and the desire to promote a multipolar world order, there has been, in recent years, an increasing anti-Western sentiment, a disappointment about the West, including an element of fear of isolation, in Russian foreign policy circles. As Putin expressed it in his speech to the Duma on 18 March 2014, two days after the (not internationally-recognized) referendum on Crimea, in which 96 percent of the votes cast reportedly were for an incorporation of Crimea into Russia: “After the dissolution of bipolarity on the planet, we no longer have stability. Key international institutions are not getting any stronger; on the contrary, in many cases, they are sadly degrading. Our Western partners, led by the United States of America, prefer not to be guided by international law in their practical policies, but by the rule of the gun. They have come to believe in their exclusivity and exceptionalism, that they can decide the destinies of the world, that only they can ever be right. They act as they please: here and there, they use force against sovereign states, building coalitions based on the principle ‘If you are not with us, you are against us.’ To make this aggression look legitimate, they force the necessary

resolutions from international organizations, and if for some reason this does not work, they simply ignore the UN Security Council and the UN overall.”<sup>94</sup> As evidence of this, Putin referred to the bombing of Beograd in 1999 and to the West’s military efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, just as he asserted that the West, in his view, “violated” the UN Security Council’s resolution on Libya when the West, instead of enforcing a no-fly zone, “started bombing” the country.<sup>95</sup> Afterwards, Putin asserted that “they have lied to us many times, made decisions behind our backs” and “placed us before an accomplished fact. This happened with NATO’s expansion to the East, as well as deployment of military infrastructure at our borders. They kept telling us the same thing: ‘Well, this does not concern you’ ... It happened with the deployment of a missile defence system ... It happened with the endless foot-dragging in the talks on visa issues, promises of fair competition and free access to global markets ... Today, we are being threatened with sanctions ... In short, we have every reason to assume that the infamous policy of containment, led in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, continues today. They are constantly trying to sweep us into a corner because we have an independent position ....”<sup>96</sup> On 4 December 2014, Putin went a step further and asserted in his annual speech to the nation that if the West had not had the events in Ukraine and on the Crimean Peninsula as pretexts to impose sanctions upon Russia, it “would have come up with some other excuse to try to contain Russia’s growing capabilities ... The policy of containment was not invented yesterday. It has been carried out against our country for many years, always, for decades, if not centuries. In short, whenever someone thinks that Russia has become too strong or independent, these tools are quickly put into use.”<sup>97</sup> The same hard, anti-Western rhetoric is found in a speech Putin gave to a group of pro-Kremlin activists on 18 November 2014. Here, Putin accused the USA of wanting to “subdue us, solve their problems at our expense. They want to dominate and influence.” To applause from the gathering, he added that “No-one in history ever managed to achieve this with Russia, and no-one ever will.”<sup>98</sup>

The containment metaphor is also used by Patrushev in an interview in *Rossiskaja Gazeta* on 15 October 2014.<sup>99</sup> Here Patrushev characterizes the “coup” in Kiev February 2014 as a result of a “systematic activity by the United States and its closest allies” with the objective to “step up the policy of ‘containment’ of our country”.<sup>100</sup> A policy, which “has been pursued unswervingly for many decades; only the forms and tactics of its implementation change.” Thus, Patrushev claims in the interview that Zbigniew Brzezinski, a Polish-American geopolitician and adviser to, amongst others, the presidents Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, devised a so-called vulnerability strategy against the Soviet Union. The idea was that the Soviet Union should be hit at the country’s weakest point, namely the economy. This was, according to Patrushev, done by undermining the Soviet Union’s main income source, oil production, through an artificially-low oil price<sup>101</sup> and by ensuring that the Soviet level of expenditure was raised through a strategy of drawing the Soviet Union into a protracted war in Afghanistan, by supporting anti-government demonstrations in Poland and other states “in the socialist camp” and by whipping up an arms race “by introducing the SDI (Strategic Defence Initiative)”. The policy succeeded fully and “provoked a profound economic crisis that extended into the political and ideological spheres”, which ultimately led to the collapse of Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991, the USA, continued its assertive and shameless behaviour in the post-Soviet area – says Patrushev. Thus, the regions in central Asia, around the Black Sea and the Caucasus, were declared as American “zones of strategic national interest”, where the only remaining obstacle for the realization of the American plans of “taking complete control of the corresponding (en-

ergy, ed.) deposits and transport corridors was Russia.” According to Patrushev, American strategists considered the solution to be “the final collapse of the system of (the Russian, ed.) state power and the subsequent dismemberment of our country (Russia, ed.).”<sup>102</sup>

Summed up, one can see that, with regard to the overall foreign policy framework, it seems like there has been a closing in of the circle of persons around Putin and that the circle of persons/institutions remaining primarily consists of siloviki, people with backgrounds in the security service or the military. The liberal-technocratic wing seems marginalized, at least with regard to the major security policy questions. This has certainly been most noticeable in connection with the war in Ukraine. The rhetoric has been sharpened, and the self-understanding has become more distinctly anti-Western, characterized by disappointment about the West’s lacking respect for Russia and the Russian foreign policy interests. In addition, there are elements of fear of containment and pronounced conspiracy theories, which are also shared/used by Putin himself. The narrowing of the circle around Putin has, with regard to the Arctic, strengthened the siloviki wing’s ideological desire for state control of the energy resources in the Arctic. Moreover, at least, the institutional and/or private economic interests of three in the inner circle are also provided for in the manoeuvre: namely Rosneft (Sechin), Gazprom (Miller) and Novatek (Timchenko).

## **RUSSIA’S ARCTIC STRATEGY**

Since 2008, Russia has had a national security strategy for the Arctic. Russia’s increased interest in the Arctic is due first and foremost to commercial interests. Russia has the longest coastline in the Arctic region, which, in coming years, is expected to become increasingly accessible to ship traffic a greater part of the year<sup>103</sup>, and people increasingly hope to be able to use the hitherto inaccessible resources in the subsurface, of which there are high expectations.

Russia’s written strategy for the Arctic is essentially based on, altogether, four documents<sup>104</sup>: 1) On the general level lies the influential Russian national Security Council’s strategy from 2009, Foundation of the State Politics of the Russian Federation on the Arctic for 2020 and in the Longer Perspective (hereafter the Arctic strategy)<sup>105</sup>, which links development in the Arctic with Russia’s national security. The Arctic strategy ties into the overall strategic lines in 2) The Russian Federation’s 2009 Strategy for National Security Up to 2020.<sup>106</sup> Both documents present the general lines and interests rather than specific strategies for reaching the set goals. The more detailed planning and implementation – but still at an overall level – is found in 3) the Energy Ministry’s 2009 Energy Strategy Of Russia For The Period Up To 2030<sup>107</sup> and in 4) the Transport Ministry’s Transport Strategy Of The Russian Federation Up to 2030.<sup>108</sup>

If we first take a look at the Arctic strategy, the strategic imperative for the Russian Arctic policy is to guarantee Russia’s position as an energy superpower. In the Arctic strategy, it is thus made clear that the ultimate goal of Russia’s policy in the Arctic is to make “use of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation as a strategic resource base”.<sup>109</sup> The Russian national interests in the Arctic are defined as follows: a) to use the natural resources in the region, primarily oil and gas, to promote Russia’s own economic development, b) to maintain the Arctic as a “zone of peace and cooperation”, c) to preserve the “unique ecological systems of the Arctic” and d) to have the northern sea route recognized as a national transportation route.<sup>110</sup> With regard to military security, the strategy states that the primary goals are to protect the Russian Federa-

tion's national frontiers in the Arctic zone and to maintain the "necessary fighting potential" of the Russian Federation's armed forces in the region.<sup>111</sup> Further, the strategy states an ambition of reaching agreement with the other Arctic coastal states regarding the division of the territory within the rules of UNCLOS and of ensuring and strengthening the good cooperation with the other Arctic states. The Arctic strategy's time plan thus looks like this: In the period 2008-2010, investigations concerning the delineation of frontiers will be made. In the period 2011-2015, the international boundaries in the Russian Arctic will be established via UNCLOS and via agreements with the Arctic coastal states. Furthermore, in this period, the economy in the Arctic will be restructured to be able to support extraction of natural resources. In the period 2016-2020, the Russian Arctic territory will be transformed into "a leading strategic resource base of the Russian Federation".<sup>112</sup> As it can perhaps be guessed, they are already well behind in relation to that somewhat optimistic time plan, not least with regard to the implementation of the submerged underground studies that can support the Russian claims. The infrastructure also lags behind, whereas the geological studies to find new oil and gas fields do proceed, even if slowly.<sup>113</sup> This is taken into account in the new 2013 Arctic strategy<sup>114</sup>, which is an update of the Arctic strategy from 2008 with a more realistic look at what is feasible, and when. Thus, the deadline for the preparatory work concerning submission of claims to UNCLOS for extension of sea territory to 350 nautical miles are now postponed from 2010 to 2015 – which corresponds well with the plan to submit a Russian petition to CLCS in the spring of 2015. The determination of the delineation of frontiers under UNCLOS and the entering of the subsequent bilateral agreements between the Arctic states are now pushed from 2015 until 2020 – whether CLCS can then abide by that tight deadline, and whether they can go on to reach bilateral agreements with the other Arctic coastal states within the timeframe is questionable. In addition, it is clear from the strategy that Russia itself does not have the technological capability to develop the hard-to-access resources in the Arctic, but is compelled to attract foreign investments and foreign know-how.<sup>115</sup> Seen overall, some, such as Laruelle, argue that "the transition from idea to reality is more complex, longer and more costly than expected, and success will not necessarily be forthcoming."<sup>116</sup>

### **Energy and transport**

Russia's energy strategy up to 2030 also singles out the Arctic as one of the areas that, in the future, will ensure Russia's position as an energy superpower. According to the strategy, development is predicted to go in three phases: 1) Until 2015, geological studies are carried out in order to single out new oil and gas fields on the continental shelf and on the Yamal Peninsula. 2) It is predicted that, in the period 2015-2022, extraction of oil and gas can commence in the area so that Russia will be in a position to compensate for the diminishing extraction of oil and gas in western Siberia. 3) From 2022 until 2030, gas is extracted in the eastern part of the Arctic Ocean.

So far, Russia has concentrated on production of oil and gas on the Yamal Peninsula and at the Timan-Pechora field. The ambition is to begin production in the Shtokman field in the Barents Sea, in the Prirazlomnoye field and in the Kara Sea as well.<sup>117</sup> But there are huge challenges in attempting to extract gas and oil in the Arctic region because of the harsh climate and the long lines of communication, which is why it requires large investments with high risk and a long investment horizon and is dependent on the energy prices continuing to be high so that the extraction is profitable. Thus, Laruelle, referring to the International Energy Agency (IEA), estimates

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that the majority of the Arctic fields are not profitable if the world market price of oil is below 120 dollars per barrel.<sup>118</sup> At the time of this writing (the beginning of January 2015), the price of Brent oil has fallen to below 50 dollars per barrel. Meanwhile, since Russian law only allows for the state energy companies Gazprom (mainly gas) and Rosneft (mainly oil) to extract oil and gas from the continental shelf – but since these two firms do not have at their own disposal the necessary technological expertise – they have entered into partnerships with a number of foreign firms.<sup>119</sup> Gazprom, for example, entered into partnership with Norway's Statoil and France's Total to extract from the Shtokman field, which ranks as one of the world's largest gas fields. However, there is a stop on the development attempts until further notice, and Statoil has even pulled completely out, since the boom in LNG gas from the Middle East and the new fracking techniques in the USA have caused the world market price for gas to fall, thus making extraction in the Shtokman field unprofitable.<sup>120</sup> Rosneft has entered into partnership with the American firm ExxonMobil for extraction of oil in the Kara Sea and with the Italian firm ENI and Statoil in the Barents Sea. The partnership, however, is hampered because Rosneft's foreign branches are becoming increasingly exposed to judicial claims in American and European courts from former investors in Yukos and former partners of the oil magnate Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Claims that presumably stand legally stronger as a result of the international Permanent Court of Arbitration's decision in 2014 in the case against the Russian state, in which Russia was ordered to pay 50 billion dollars to the Yukos plaintiffs. A decision that Russia immediately appealed.<sup>121</sup> In addition to that is the problem that Rosneft and Gazprom Neft – a subsidiary of Gazprom that deals with oil production – are hit by sanctions from the EU and USA in the wake of the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the war in south-eastern Ukraine.

One of the major obstacles for the exploitation of the expected riches in the Arctic underground is the lack of infrastructure. Therefore, the transport strategy emphasizes the need to open the northern sea route for international commercial ship traffic, develop ports and supply stations, guarantee supervision and build up capacity to search for and rescue vessels in distress at sea, and build up a capable ice-breaker fleet that (in the longer term) can keep the route open. Russia possesses some of the world's most powerful ice-breakers. In 2011, Russia thus had six nuclear-powered ice-breakers: four of the Arktika class, which operate along the whole length of the northern sea route, but where only two are in operation, and two of the Taimyr class, which only cover parts of the route and escort ships into ports and up rivers. According to the transport strategy, the plan is to build three new nuclear-powered ice-breakers to replace the Arktika class vessels, which were built in the 1970s and 1980s and are expected to be decommissioned in 2020. In addition to that, there are plans to build an unspecified number of diesel-powered ice-breakers, probably six according to Märta Carlsson and Niklas Granholm from FOI in Stockholm, to service gas and oil fields on the continental shelf. For those purposes, the Transport Ministry has thus ordered three nuclear-powered and three diesel-powered ice-breakers. The first will go into use in 2016-2017 in the western part of the Russian Arctic. The question is whether six nuclear-powered and nine diesel-powered ice-breakers are enough to keep the shipping routes open - and whether Russia's pressed shipyard industry can deliver them on time.

It is a highly prioritized goal amongst Russian authorities to establish a functioning border control and rescue service along the whole northern sea route, and over a period of ten years 134 billion roubles will be provided for that purpose.<sup>122</sup> The Transport Ministry and the Civil Defence Ministry plan to establish ten rescue stations along the whole northern sea route: in Murmansk,

Arkhangelsk, Naryan-Mar, Vorkuta, Nadym, Dudinka, Tiksi and Pevek and in the Provideniya Bay and the Anadyr Bay. The rescue stations will be accessible from the air and will have what corresponds with ten helicopters (Mi-8c and Ka-27s) and an unknown total of airplanes (Il-76 and An-74s) at their disposal. Border guards will also be placed at the rescue stations, just as the guard service will additionally set up ten border posts along the coast. A problem, though, is that only a few of the Border Guard Service's ships are well-adapted to operate in the Arctic areas.

### **Can Russia deliver the goods?**

The problem with regard to the extraction of the presumed enormous energy resources is that the Russian state energy giants, Gazprom (gas) and Rosneft (oil) lack the technological capacity, know-how and experience to extract gas and oil under difficult offshore conditions in the Arctic. Therefore, they have entered into partnerships with Western energy companies, as it was prescribed in the Russian foreign policy concept from 2009. Where Rosneft is concerned, this has meant that the company has exposed itself to civil lawsuits in American and European courts by former shareholders in Yukos, since Rosneft, through the shelf company Baikal Finance Group, at a closed auction in December 2003 bought Yukos' principal production company, Yuganskneftegaz, for well under the market price after the arrest of Khodorkovsky. At the same time, the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and Russia's active participation in the war in Ukraine have drastically worsened the relationship with the West, which has introduced a number of sanctions.<sup>123</sup> The sanctions hit selected persons amongst the power elite in the Kremlin, amongst them Sechin (who, as mentioned, is chief of Rosneft). The West has partly introduced targeted sanctions, which amongst other things hit the energy sector – including the participation of Western energy companies in joint ventures in energy extraction precisely in the Arctic. How this will affect the extraction of energy and natural resources in the Arctic in practice is so far difficult to say. But if the Western energy companies in the longer term need to stay away because of the sanctions – or in the longer term choose to pull out because of the uncertainty – it will clearly delay Russia's plan to develop the anticipated enormous energy resources in the Arctic. The same can be expected to result from the Western sanctions against selected Russian banks and of restrictions with regard to the Russian banks' borrowing opportunities in Western financial institutions. When the borrowing opportunities are limited, the loans become more expensive, thus limiting the profitability of the very long-range and cost-heavy investments in the Arctic. If, however, one takes as the starting point the lessons from the after-effects of Russia's war in Georgia in 2008, when the rhetoric against Russia was also sharp, albeit not as sharp as after the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the support for the Ukrainian separatists in 2014, there is probably just talk of a delay, since especially the EU is quick to forget the fine principles and preferably will turn back to business as usual as soon as the opportunity presents itself. But all of this is very difficult to predict, as it depends; on how the relation between Russia and the West develops and whether Russia continues to support the separatists in Ukraine; on whether the war expand; and on whether we in the coming months or years come to see other 'Novorossiya projects' in the post-Soviet region; and on the EU's capability to stick to important foreign policy decisions in the region, where the member states traditionally have been divided into "soft-liners" and "hard-liners" respectively.

Yet another unknown factor is how Russian-Chinese cooperation will develop. Russia has for many years had an ambition to diversify marketing possibilities for Russian oil and gas and the-

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reby reduce its dependence on primarily selling to European countries – they, in turn, have had an ambition to reduce their dependence on Russian gas in particular. The negotiations over the gas pipeline called The Power of Siberia, which will deliver gas to China and which with great media attention was signed in May 2014 by Gazprom and the Chinese state gas company CNPC, actually date back to 2004.<sup>124</sup> One of the reasons why the Russians and the Chinese have had difficulty meeting at the negotiating table is a deeply-rooted Russian ambivalence. The Russians are worried about becoming a “resource appendix” to the onrushing China, and Moscow have been worried about increased Chinese influence, particularly in the far-eastern parts of Russia, which are thinly populated on the Russian side of the border while the opposite is the case on the Chinese side.<sup>125</sup> The worsening relation to the West, including the Western sanctions against Russia, may however come to function as a catalyst for increased Russian cooperation with the Chinese. “The key actors in Russia’s oil and gas sector have needs that China can meet: Rosneft needs cash and Gazprom needs to diversify its energy markets.”<sup>126</sup>

### **Military presence in the Arctic**

The Arctic functions as a deployment area for Russia’s strategic air force, and the projected path of the Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles passes over the North Pole towards the USA. The Russian Northern Fleet has its bases in the European part of the Russian Arctic. The headquarters are in Severomorsk close to Murmansk and are supplemented by bases on the Kola Peninsula and a base in the White Sea. The Barents Sea, as an access route to the White Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, is especially important for Russia from a strategic viewpoint – not least because of the Gulf Stream, which ensures that the ports in the north can be accessed year-round. That is also reflected in the Northern Fleet’s significance for Russia’s nuclear triad – thus, 67 percent of Russia’s 576 (2011 figure) sea-based nuclear warheads are on nuclear-powered submarines operating from the Northern Fleet’s bases on the Kola Peninsula.<sup>127</sup> The Russian Pacific Fleet has its headquarters in Vladivostok, supplemented by a number of bases, amongst others Vilyuchinsk on the Kamchatka Peninsula, where the Pacific Fleet’s nuclear submarines are based. They, too, operate at regular intervals in the Arctic. Between the two fleets, there are enormous areas without military presence with a navigation route of between 2,200 and 2,900 nautical miles, depending on the ice conditions. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian navy has, in fact, suffered from chronic underfunding, which is why its capability has been greatly reduced compared to its former greatness. In 1986, the Northern Fleet thus consisted of approximately 180 nuclear submarines of various classes, whereas today it has (2011 figure) only 42,<sup>128</sup> and even though the Russian strategic submarines resumed their operations under the Arctic ice cap in 2006, it is expected that the largest part of the strategic submarine fleet will be decommissioned within the next few years.<sup>129</sup> However, in February 2011, First Deputy Minister of Defence Vladimir Popovkin was able to announce that Russia, with its then-newly adopted rearmament programme until 2020 would spend, in all, 22 trillion roubles (730 billion dollars [2011 rate]) on the purchase of new military equipment.<sup>130</sup> According to Popovkin, the plan is to prioritize the development and maintenance of Russia’s nuclear triad. Until 2020, the navy, according to the rearmament programme, has been allocated 4.700 billion roubles to buy approximately 100 new naval vessels<sup>131</sup> – of which a large part presumably will end up in the Northern Fleet, since the emphasis is traditionally placed there.<sup>132</sup> However, the Black Sea Fleet has gained new attention after the war with Georgia in 2008 – a tendency that presumably will be reinforced by the war in Ukraine. According to the rearmament programme, eight strategic submarines (SSBN Borei class) armed with Bulava ballistic missiles, probably ten nuclear-

powered attack submarines (SSN Yasen class) and six diesel-electric driven submarines (SSK Kilo class) shall be purchased.<sup>133</sup> The eight strategic submarines are expected to form part of the Northern Fleet and the Pacific Fleet, and, in January 2013, the first of the submarines, Yuriy Dolgorukiy, was delivered to the Northern Fleet. The rearmament programme further includes purchase/production of 600 aircraft, several hundred modern S-400 and S-500 air defence systems, 80 new surface vessels for the navy (of these, 15 frigates and 35 corvettes) and 1,000 new helicopters.<sup>134</sup> Kristian Åtland, however, estimates, based on a review of the fate of previous weapons modernization programmes, that “there is reason to question the economic realism of the Russian rearmament plans.” Thus, contrary to the planning in the 2007-2015 armament programme, until February 2011, Russia’s defence industry was only capable of delivering one of seven promised nuclear-powered submarines and two of twelve planned corvettes and frigates, and 22 of 116 planned warplanes.<sup>135</sup>

At present, the Northern Fleet has 13 large surface ships, of which seven are operational (two cruisers and five destroyers). None of the Northern Fleet’s ships, however, are designed to ice-class standards, which limits their capability of operating in the Arctic.<sup>136</sup> The Northern Fleet’s submarine force now consists of a nuclear-powered submarine armed with ballistic missiles, Dmitri Donskoi (SSBN Typhoon class)<sup>137</sup>; six operational nuclear-powered submarines armed with ballistic missiles (SSBN Delta IV class) and one in reserve; and a more modern nuclear-powered submarine with ballistic missiles (SSBN Borei class) (the above-mentioned Yuriy Dolgorukiy), which does not yet have a fully operational missile system. In addition, the Northern Fleet has a number of nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSN), of which the most modern are six in the Yasen class. In addition, there are three nuclear-powered cruise missile submarines (SSGN) in the Oscar II class and six to seven diesel-electric submarines in the Kilo class (SSK).<sup>138</sup>

In the Arctic, the Russian army is primarily represented by the 200th Motorized Infantry Brigade, which is stationed in Pechenga close to the northern border and makes up the basis of the Arctic brigade<sup>139</sup>, which was officially declared operational on 1 December 2014. There is a plan to set up another brigade in 2016, to be stationed in Yamal-Nenets, east of the Ural Mountains in the Arctic. According to Colonel-General Oleg Salyukov, the task of the new joint Arctic Command, which is called North (Sever) and shall be operational in 2017,<sup>140</sup> is to protect existing and future military installations along the coast and in the Russian Arctic, ensure free passage on the northern sea route, and show the other Arctic nations Russia’s military presence in the region.<sup>141</sup> The border control is carried out in cooperation with the border guards under FSB, which has the main responsibility for patrolling and monitoring in the Arctic. Further, in Kamenka in Karelen, there is a motorized infantry brigade, the 138th. At the end of 2014, according to the plans, Russia should have additionally moved military units to Kotelny Island north of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) in south-east Siberia and another motorized infantry brigade to Alakurtti, a village in Murmansk Oblast.

The Russian air force is also far away from its former greatness in the soviet days. Many of the former fighter plane regiments in north-west Russia have been either cut back, transferred or joined together with other units. Russia’s air force in the Arctic consists, for the most part, of the air capacity of the Northern Fleet and the Pacific Fleet. Many of the aircraft cannot cover the enormous distances in the Arctic, but a number of Tu-142 anti-submarine planes and Il-38 mari-

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time patrol planes can. The Northern Fleet has 13 Tu-142s and 14 Il-38s, while the Pacific Fleet has 14 Tu-142s and 15 Il-38s. How many are, at present, operational is, however, not known. The Northern Fleet has 18-19 carrier-based Su-33 (Flanker-D) planes, which can be refueled in the air, stationed on the Kola Peninsula, where, in addition, there are two ground-to-air missile regiments (S-300P SAM). There is also a missile regiment in Severodvinsk, not far from Arkhangelsk. Thus, Olenya Air Base near Olenegorsk on the Kola Peninsula is still in use, just like the Besovets base in Karelen. Here, moreover, are found a number of old Soviet fighter planes such as the MiG-25 (Foxbat) the MiG-31 (Foxhound). The strategic bombers, first and foremost the Tu-95 (Bear) and the new supersonic Tu-160 (Blackjack), are primarily based at Engels Air Base near Saratov in southern Russia, but, at regular intervals, they carry out patrol flights in the Arctic airspace – although the number of patrols is still relatively limited compared with the Soviet period.<sup>142</sup> The strategic air force has 16 Tu-160, 32 Tu-95MS6 and 31 Tu-95MS16 aircraft.<sup>143</sup>

For several years, there have been plans to again use some of the airfields that have been left to stand unused since the Soviet Union's collapse. In his speech to the directorate of the Russian Defence Ministry on 10 December 2013, Putin thus ordered the Defence Ministry to make an extra effort to establish infrastructure and military units in the Arctic. "Russia is actively exploring this promising region, returning to it, and should use all possible channels to protect its security and national interests."<sup>144</sup> Putin said further that, in 2013, Russia had re-established a number of the previous Soviet airfields in the high north and in the Arctic, namely the airfields Temp, Tiksi, Naryan-Mar, Alykel, Anadyr, Rogachevo and Nagurskoye, and he also said that the Tiksi and Severomorsk 1 airfields were just then undergoing renovation, which he expected to be finished before the year's end.<sup>145</sup> Some of that is old news. Thus, the airfield in Tiksi has been used for a number of years by the strategic air forces in connection with their operations. In 2012, the Defence Ministry decided that a group of MiG-31 interceptor planes should be deployed to Rogachevo airfield at Novaya Semlya. The planes were to be used as a part of the missile defence system and protect Russia against attack from the north. They were to operate between the Barents Sea and the Laptev Sea. The objective was, amongst other things, to monitor and patrol the nearly 2,500 kilometre long stretch, which had not been covered by radar since the fall of the Soviet Union. At the start of February 2013, the new Defence Minister Shoygu reversed the decision. Thus, this, for the time being, leaves the Russian strategic submarine fleet in the Arctic without radar or air support. Shoygu has, however, promised that the Russian part of the Arctic would get "full radar coverage" by the end of 2014.<sup>146</sup>

In sum, one can establish that there is still some distance to go before Russia's military capability in the Arctic (and on the whole) reaches the Soviet Union's high level, if ever. With regard to the ambition to be able to use the Arctic as a strategic resource base for Russia's development, there are likewise big technological and profitability-related challenges, which, in the short term, will be difficult to overcome. As Ekaterina Klimenko states it, Russia cannot, in the short term, do without its Western partners, as Russian firms lack "the necessary technology, skills and experience to work on the Arctic shelf."<sup>147</sup> The tentative Russian-Chinese rapprochement has, so far, had difficulty in presenting a solution to the problem.

## CONCLUSION

Russia's political debate about the Arctic is dominated by two overriding discourses, which, at first glance, look like opposites. Partly an IR realism/geopolitical inspired and patriotic discourse with certain elements of romantic nationalist rhetoric, which deals with "exploring", "winning" and "conquering" the Arctic and shows a willingness to use power, including military power, to achieve its goals if necessary. Partly an IR liberalism, international law-inspired modernization discourse, in which the language is characterized by words such as "negotiation", "cooperation" and "joint ventures", and in which the assumption is that all states profit more by cooperating peacefully with each other in the Arctic. So far, the IR liberalism track has been dominant in Russian politics with regard to the Arctic. Thus, the Russian Foreign Ministry and, especially, Foreign Minister Lavrov have primarily drawn the overall lines in the Russian Arctic policy, supported by the Transport Ministry and the Energy Ministry. On the other side stand the national Security Council led by Patrushev and the Russian Defence Ministry led by Shoygu. Both have succeeded in securing and maintaining Putin's interest in the Arctic, just as they, to a certain extent, speak about the Arctic in the same way as Putin, namely in IR realism/geopolitical terms. Nevertheless, the Russian Foreign Ministry has laid out the lines regarding the Arctic – presumably because of Putin's pragmatic acknowledgement that the UN track is the most productive way to secure support for the Russian desires to obtain expanded underwater territory out to the 350 nautical mile limit. This is possible if CLCS, under the terms of UNCLOS, recognizes that the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges are extensions of the Siberian continental shelf, and if Russia is subsequently able to enter into bilateral agreements with the other Arctic coastal states that claim parts of the same territory – the USA, Canada and Denmark (Greenland) respectively. In that connection, it is worth noting that the claim Denmark submitted to CLCS in the middle of December 2014 to a great extent overlaps with the Russian claim. If the anticipated Russian claim is recognized by CLCS – the petition is expected to be submitted in the spring of 2015 – Russia stands to gain an ocean territory of nearly 1.2 million square kilometres that can be added to the already vast Russian territory.

When Putin, who is the most important foreign policy actor in Russia, supports the IR liberalism course, even though he primarily sees and speaks about the world within the framework of an IR realism/geopolitical worldview, it is not, however, only because of a pragmatic acknowledgement of which means best serve the Russian goals. It is also because the two foreign policy wings in the Kremlin – of which Putin is the ultimate judge – despite their disagreement on the means, are quite in agreement about the objective: that the Arctic shall make the continuation of Russia's restoration as an internationally-acknowledged great power possible.

Thus, Russia's ambition in the Arctic is first and foremost of an economical nature. On the one hand, there is a desire to develop the enormous natural resources expected to be found in the region – especially oil and gas. The development of the natural resources has thus enjoyed first priority since they shall guarantee Russia's future position as an energy superpower when the capacity in the existing oil and gas fields in Siberia diminishes – which the Energy Ministry anticipates will occur at some point between 2015 and 2030. On the other hand, Russian see great potential in opening an ice-free northern sea route between Europe and Asia across the Russian Arctic, with the hope that the international shipping industry can see the common sense in saving up to nearly 4,000 nautical miles on a voyage from Ulsan, Korea, to Rotterdam, Holland,

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so that Russia can make money servicing the ships and permitting passages through what Russia considers Russian territorial waters.

Although, at first glance, it can appear to be very contradictory that Russia's foreign policy elite, including, not least, Putin himself, on the one hand speak of the Arctic policy in IR realism/geopolitical, even occasionally strong patriotic terms, but on the other hand choose to follow an IR liberalism course in their foreign policy, it is anything but contradictory. Behind it, namely, lies a realistic balancing of which foreign policy tools best secure the Russian interests in which situations.

The question is, then, whether Russia has the ability to develop the wealth of resources that the Arctic reportedly conceals. The two large state energy conglomerates, Gazprom and Rosneft, which are the only ones that have the right to extract oil and gas in the Arctic, lack the technological capacity, know-how and experience to extract oil and gas under the extraordinarily difficult conditions in the Arctic, where the most important deposits are expected to be found offshore in very deep water. According to plan, the procurement of this technology and experience should be achieved through the previously entered into partnerships with Western energy companies. Partnerships, which – at the moment – have fallen victim to the Western sanctions imposed on Russia because of the annexation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine. The sanctions' tightening of the borrowing opportunities in Western banks also hits the cost-heavy projects in the Arctic, as it reduces the profitability of the projects. Most important with regard to the profitability, however, are the falling prices of oil and – at the time of this writing (the beginning of January 2015), the oil price is below 50 dollars per barrel. In this report, there is reference to an estimate based on information from the International Energy Agency (IEA), which says that most of the Arctic fields are not profitable if the world market price of oil is below 120 dollars per barrel. The projects in the Arctic are not only expensive, they are also very long-term, and therefore the profitability is not likely to be re-established until the energy prices increase again. Whether Gazprom and Rosneft choose to suspend the projects in the Arctic in the meantime – where it is, after all, difficult to make headway because of the lack of technology and know-how – or whether the Russian state will pump additional sums into the companies, is uncertain.

One of the Kremlin's hopes is that the increased Russian-Chinese cooperation take over where the Russian-Western cooperation slows down. There has long been a strong Russian desire to find new markets for Russian energy and thereby partly disengage from the dependence on mainly selling to Europe, especially when it pertains to gas. The question is whether the Western sanctions can be instrumental in overcoming the deeply-rooted Russian fear of ending up as a "resource appendix" to the onrushing Chinese economy, which, so far, has been a strong contributing reason for keeping the Russia-Chinese rapprochement in check. One of the foremost Russian foreign policy goals is to restrain the West's, especially the USA's, influence and promote a multipolar world order, with Russia as one of the poles. In this connection, Russia has long sought support from the Chinese, who also would like to weaken the American unipolarity. The question is whether China, in the long-term, is interested in a multipolar world order or prefers a bipolar world order in which the Chinese and the Americans can set the agenda, which the rest of the world, including Russia, then must follow. This circumstance also contributes to the Russian ambivalence.

The plans to open an ice-free navigation route in the Arctic Ocean are hampered due the lack of ice-breakers. For even though Russia has some of the world's strongest nuclear-powered ice-breakers, the majority of them will be decommissioned in 2020 due to age, and, at present, Russia only has six nuclear-powered and nine diesel-powered ice-breakers on the drawing board to keep the sailing routes open and service the ports, rivers and drilling platforms, etc. in the enormous area. Whether the Russian shipyard industry can deliver these ice-breakers is, however, difficult to predict – but its previous inability to deliver the agreed orders on time and on budget is not promising. Russia's ambitions are also hampered because most of the Northern Fleet's ships are not designed to ice-class standard, which limits their ability to operate in the Arctic waters. In addition to that, the Russian ambitions are hampered due to the fact that a stretch of approximately 2,500 kilometres has not been monitored by radar since the fall of the Soviet Union, and because the plans to deploy a group of MiG-31 interceptor planes to do, amongst other things, the monitoring duty were reversed in November 2012 when Shoygu replaced Anatoly Serdyukov as Defence Minister. Shoygu has promised, though, that the radars will be operational again before the end of 2014. Whether that is the case or not, is not known at the time of writing. All in all, one can say that Russia's capacity for patrolling and monitoring – not to mention conducting rescues – in the Arctic is limited in relation to the region's enormous size. Thus, the question is whether Russia can, in reality, carry out its ambitious goals for the Arctic region.

With regard to the Russian goal of ensuring a robust military presence in the Arctic, there are a number of unknown factors when assessing the effects of the highly-publicized Russian rearmament programme from 2011, which involves an injection of 22 trillion roubles (730 billion dollars [2011 rate]) for the purchase of new military equipment for the Russian defence until 2020. Whether the Russian military capabilities in the Arctic, comparatively seen, are increased in relation to the USA's and the Arctic NATO countries' capabilities in the Arctic in the course of a five-to-ten year period depend on whether:

- Russia maintains the rearmament programme in its full form in spite of the prospects of recession, growing capital flight, increasing inflation, increasing interest rates, an oil price around 50 dollars per barrel (when the state budget had counted on 105 dollars per barrel to be able to balance<sup>148</sup>) and a rouble rate that, in the period June 2014 to the end of December 2014, fell nearly 50 percent (but regained some of the loss over the New Year).
- The Russian defence industry is able to deliver according to the plans in the rearmament programme, which the industry's previous track record does not indicate.
- The delivered equipment lives up to or is better than NATO standard in regard to technological level, utility and quality.
- USA and NATO maintain their defence budgets at the current level or adjust them downwards, and the distribution of resources within NATO countries does not prioritize the Arctic regions at the expense of other places in the world.

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- Sweden and Finland do not increase their rapprochement towards NATO, which could have strategic consequences for the Northern Fleet's bases in Murmansk, etc.

If the points above are realized, it will, seen in isolation, further change the balance of power in the region to the advantage of Russia, which, at present, is considered to be the strongest military power in the Arctic.

The question is, however, whether this will have any real effect with regard to Russia's ability to fulfil the Russian foreign policy goals when it concerns the Arctic. Partly because the policy carried out is based on the UN's institutions and negotiations, not least with regard to the other Arctic states, which Russia must reach agreement with if the Russian territorial claims in the Arctic shall be met and recognized by the international community after the CLCS has come up with its assessment. Partly because the foremost foreign policy goal for the Arctic is to transform the Russian territory into a strategic resource base that can promote Russia's economic development. Thus, so far, Russia's policy in the Arctic is not based on military robustness and power. At the same time, the geographic circumstances and the enormous distances in the Arctic make military presence less important from a regional perspective. One of the conditions that goes against a future "armed brinkmanship" in the Arctic, as some IR realists fear, is thus the difficulty of sustaining a real, robust, permanent presence and sovereignty enforcement in the region without requiring a great amount of resources to do it.

Thus, one can argue that the Russian arms build-up in the Arctic primarily has two foreign policy objectives: 1) It is a part of the overall balancing of the USA and NATO with the objective of ensuring a robust repulsion force on the northern flank. Russia will simply no longer accept the current situation with an open northern flank. Thus, the Arctic strategy's wording about the build-up of the necessary fighting potential should be seen in the light of the overall balance of power with the USA and NATO rather than in the light of the regional Arctic needs, since the Russian Arctic north coast is, in military circles, seen as a possible invasion route for enemy forces. The regional Arctic security requirements thus deal primarily with being able to enforce sovereignty, including international law that could establish that Russia has control over its territory – but, in this connection, one really needs very little, as witnessed by the Danish-Greenlandic dogsled patrols of the kingdom's borders. Secondly, Arctic security requirements are about rescue service and, to a lesser extent, about fighting terrorism. 2) The second objective with a build-up of fighting potential in the Arctic could be seen as a form of insurance policy, in case the decision from CLCS is unclear or go strongly against Russia's wishes and require further collection of documentation, a new petition, etc. In this case, the reasoning in the Kremlin may be that a robust military presence in the Arctic can guarantee Russia's interests until there is a final decision from CLCS. A robust military presence in the Arctic will, in an IR realism/geopolitical worldview, be further necessary, or at least advantageous, in connection with the bilateral negotiations with the other Arctic coastal states over the division of the territory, as this is considered as a possible enforcer of Russian interests.

This perhaps especially holds true in relation to Denmark (Greenland), which – in contrast to Norway – has not entered into an agreement with Russia concerning the delineation of frontiers. The Danish-Greenlandic claim, which was submitted to CLCS in mid-December 2014, goes from

Greenland's existing 200-mile territorial sea limit along the submerged Lomonosov ridge all the way over to the Russian 200-mile limit on the other side of the North Pole, thereby making great inroads into an area that Russia considers as its territory. The question is, then, whether the Danish-Greenlandic claim – if CLCS recognizes it – will be considered by Russia as legitimate, or whether it, during a continued confrontation between the West and Russia, will be seen as a little-too-bold, maximalist claim that can be made the subject of a Russian foreign policy mobilization of patriotic circles and, thus, reactivate the IR realism/geopolitical discourse.

One argument that speaks for continued cooperation in the Arctic, including if the war in Ukraine drags on, is that the Arctic policy has traditionally been isolated from the ups and downs of the relationship between Russia and the West – precisely because all of the important actors in the Arctic actively work for such an isolation. Thus, cooperation in the Arctic has actually taken place in the past despite disagreements over the Russian-Georgian war and NATO's missile defence plans. The question is, then, whether this will hold true in the long term, since the Arctic policy is also, in the long run, dependent upon how the relations between the great powers, especially Russia's relation to the USA and the West, develop.

An additional unknown factor in connection with the Russian policy regarding the Arctic is the case that the circle of persons who has access to Putin and thus may influence the foreign policy decision-making processes, has apparently narrowed considerably, not least up to and after the war in Ukraine. This narrowing has clearly weakened the liberal-technocratic wing, isolated Putin from critical voices and abandoned him to the advice from the siloviki wing. The question is whether that, in the somewhat longer term, could also have influence on the Arctic policy, or whether Putin – perhaps in the light of the growing economic crisis – will stick to the pragmatic choice of the IR liberalism course, which, so far, has served Russia so well in the Arctic.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Scott G. Borgerson, "The Coming Arctic Boom", *Foreign Affairs*, 92/4 (2013), p. 65. In contrast to the years in the middle of the 2010s, there were several years at the beginning of the 1990s when political idealism characterized the political debates about the Arctic region. The Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 brought along with regard to the Arctic – like other places – a hope of a less conflict-filled world, just as increased focus on rights of the Arctic indigenous peoples came in these years. And while a still greater portion of the ice cap melted, particularly the West's focus on climate effects and the Arctic environment increased. That changed in the middle of the first decade of the new millennium, after which the debate about the Arctic was, for a number of years, characterized by fear of a new "great game" or "scramble for resources". Jason Dittmer, Sami Moisio, Alan Ingram and Klaus Dodds, "Have you heard the one about the disappearing ice? Recasting Arctic geopolitics", *Political Geography*, 30 (2011), p. 204.
- 2 Scott G. Borgerson, "Arctic Meltdown: The Economic and Security Implications of Global Warming", *Foreign Affairs* 87/2 (2008), pp. 63-77.
- 3 With the concept IR realism, it means here both neorealism and realism (also called classic realism), understood as the two schools within international political theory that are characterized by (amongst others) the theorists Kenneth Waltz (neorealism) and Henry Morgenthau (realism). See Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House 1979); Henry Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1948). For an overview of international political theory, see Ole Wæver, *Introduktion til Studiet af International Politik* (København: Politiske Studier 1992).
- 4 With the term IR liberalism, what is meant is the school within international political theory that is called liberalism, idealism or utopianism (the last especially by critics) as well as more modern versions such as liberal institutionalism. See Ole Wæver, *Introduktion til Studiet af International Politik* (København: Politiske Studier 1992).
- 5 Scott G. Borgerson, "The Coming Arctic Boom", *Foreign Affairs*, 92/4 (2013), pp. 76-89.
- 6 The report is thus framed by an understanding of international politics that one can perhaps call a pragmatic interpretation of the Copenhagen School, in which foreign policy is made possible within the framework of some overarching, layered discourses, through which the Russian foreign policy establishment formulates and reformulates the Russian self-understanding and the possible political prioritizations that match it. For more about the discussion of a so-called Scandinavian approach to foreign policy theory, see Ole Wæver, "Thinking and Rethinking in Foreign Policy", *Cooperation and Conflict*, XXV(1990a) pp. 153-170. Ole Wæver, "The Language of Foreign Policy", *Journal of Peace Research*, XXVII, 3, (1990b), pp. 335-343.
- 7 [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov).
- 8 Many definitions of the Arctic are found. Some relate to geography, others to average temperatures, yet others to population groups. One of the most often used definitions of the Arctic is the Arctic Circle (the polar circle) at 66° 33' North latitude. The problem is that definition does not include large portions of the White Sea and the whole Kamchatka Peninsula, which are quite relevant in the discussion of the Russian Arctic. Thus, the definition followed here is the one Märta Carlsson and Niklas Granholm use, namely the areas north of the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel, which includes the greater part, but not all, of the Kamchatka Peninsula. Märta Carlsson and Niklas Granholm, "Russia and the Arctic: Analysis and Discussion of Russian Strategies", FOI (2013), p. 10. Note! The numbers from the USGS refer to an Arctic definition along the 66° 56' North latitude.
- 9 Circum-Arctic Resource Appraisal: Estimates of Undiscovered Oil and Gas North of the Arctic Circle, USGS Fact Sheet 2008-3049, U.S. Geological Survey, Denver, Colorado, <http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2008/3049/fs2008-3049.pdf>.
- 10 Märta Carlsson and Niklas Granholm, "Russia and the Arctic: Analysis and Discussion of Russian Strategies", FOI (2013), p. 19.
- 11 Vladimir Putin, "Meeting of the Security Council on State Policy in the Arctic", 22 April 2014, downloaded on 1 June 2014 from <http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/news/7065>.
- 12 [http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs\\_new/clcs\\_home.htm](http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/clcs_home.htm).
- 13 Katarzyna Zysk, "Russia's Arctic Strategy: Ambitions and Constraints", *JFQ*, 57/2 (2010), p. 105.
- 14 Heather Conley and Jamie Kraut, U. S. Strategic Interests in the Arctic, CSIS, April (2010), p. 3.
- 15 Marlene Laruelle, "Resource, State Reassertion and International Recognition: Locating the Drivers of Russia's Arctic Policy", *The Polar Journal*, 4/2, (2014), p. 255.
- 16 Pavel K. Baev, "Russia's Arctic Ambitions and Anxieties", *Current History*, October (2013), p. 22.
- 17 Pavel K. Baev, "Russia's Arctic Ambitions and Anxieties", *Current History*, October (2013), p. 31, note 17.
- 18 Igor Sechin, "Rosneft to Invest \$400 Billion in Arctic By 2030", *RFE/RL* 31/8 (2014), downloaded on 1 September 2014 from [www.rferl.org/content/russia-rosneft-arctic-exxonmobil-kara-sea-oil/26559467.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-rosneft-arctic-exxonmobil-kara-sea-oil/26559467.html).

- 19 Dmitry Medvedev, "Go Russia!", (10 September 2009), <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/298>.
- 20 Whether behind these two ways of discussing Russia's policy in the Arctic (and the world), which I categorize as IR realism/geopolitical and IR liberalism respectively, there are underlying forms of discourse is a topic outside of this report's focus. But the discourses could well be thought to be close to the centuries-old debate about Russia's relation to the West, above all the debate between Zapadniki (Westernizers) and Slavophiles. See, for example, Iver B. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*, (London: Routledge 1996).
- 21 As Marlene Laruelle (and Pavel Baev) say, "the conquest of the High North" is "an identity-building project" in Russia. Marlene Laruelle, "Russian Military Presence in the High North: Projection of Power and Capacities of Action", in Stephen J. Blank (ed.), *Russia in the Arctic*, (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute 2011), pp. 63-89.
- 22 Artur Chilingarov, "Artur Chilingarov: Russia's Arctic Explorer", *The Moscow News*, 17/7 (2008), downloaded on 15 September 2014 from <http://themoscownews.com/proetcontra/20080717/55338262.html>.
- 23 Artur Indzhiev's book is here referred to from Marlene Laruelle, "Larger, Higher, Farther North ... Geographical Metanarratives of the Nation in Russia", *Eurasian Geography and Commerce*, 53/5 (2012), p. 567.
- 24 Alexander Bobdunov is here referred to from Marlene Laruelle, "Larger, Higher, Farther...", p. 567.
- 25 Andrey Kolesnikov, "The polar war is underway", (3 August 2007), <http://grani.ru/opinion/kolesnikov/m.125502.html>.
- 26 Peter MacKay, *Montreal Gazette* (2 August 2007).
- 27 Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020 (12 May 2009), Section 12. Unofficial translation, downloaded on 14 September 2014 from <http://rustrans.wikidot.com/russia-s-national-security-strategy-to-2020>.
- 28 Vladimir Putin, "A Summary Meeting of the Defense Ministry Board" (27 February 2013); here referred to from Lassi Heininen, Aleksander Sergunin and Gleb Yarovoy, "New Russian Arctic Doctrine: From Idealism to Realism?", *Valdai Discussion Club* (15 July 2013) downloaded on 6 November 2014 from [http://valdaiclub.com/russia\\_and\\_the\\_world/60220.html](http://valdaiclub.com/russia_and_the_world/60220.html).
- 29 Vladimir Putin, "Expanded Meeting of the Defence Ministry Board" (10 December 2013), downloaded on 5 November 2014 from <http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6395/print>.
- 30 Vladimir Putin, "Seliger 2014 National Youth Forum" (29 August 2014), downloaded on 14 September 2014 from <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/22864>.
- 31 Pavel Baev, "Russia's Arctic Policy and the Northern Fleet Modernization", *IFRI, Russie. Nei: Visions*, 66 (2012), p. 4.
- 32 Jason Dittmer, Sami Moisiso, Alan Ingram and Klaus Dodds, "Have you heard the one about the disappearing ice? Recasting Arctic geopolitics", *Political Geography*, 30 (2011), p. 208.
- 33 The Ilulissat Declaration, 2008, p. 1. Russia chose to support the Ilulissat Declaration contrary to the fact that many of the Arctic Council's priorities deal with environmental standards for extraction of natural resources from the Arctic's vulnerable landscape and thereby are directly contrary to the production culture that rules in the large state energy companies Gazprom and Rosneft, where environmental considerations are given very low priority.
- 34 "Joint Statement on Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean", p. 2, downloaded from [http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/Folkerett/030427\\_english\\_4.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/Folkerett/030427_english_4.pdf).
- 35 Elana Wilson Rowe and Helge Blakkisrud, "A New Kind of Arctic Power? Russia's Policy Discourses and Diplomatic Practices in the Circumpolar North", *Geopolitics*, 19/1 (2014), p. 74.
- 36 Baev, *Russia's Arctic Ambition*, p. 267. Unless Putin's official position was a side in Putin's and Medvedev's "good cop-bad cop" strategy.
- 37 Vyacheslav Silanov, "Kak Putinu vernut Barentsevo more?" (What can Putin do to get the Barents Sea back?), *Tikhookeanski Vestnik*, (13 February 2013) Vyacheslav Silanov is a former Soviet deputy fisheries minister, now a prominent commentator in northern Russia. Here referred to from Geir Hønneland, *Arctic Politics, the Law of the Sea and Russian Identity* (Hampshire: Palgrave 2014), p. 3.
- 38 Vladimir Putin, "Meeting of the Security Council on State Policy in the Arctic" (22 April 2014), downloaded on 1 June 2014 from <http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/news/7065>.
- 39 "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation", (12 February 2013), unofficial translation, no. 65. Downloaded on 17 September 2014 from [www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D).
- 40 "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation", no. 73.
- 41 "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation", no. 34 f.
- 42 Sergey Lavrov, "Speech of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the Eighth Ministerial Session of the Arctic Council, Kiruna" (2013), downloaded on 19 September 2014 from [www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/7E6FOCD8D75A2D7444257B6E002A14A2](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/7E6FOCD8D75A2D7444257B6E002A14A2).
- 43 Rowe and Blakkisrud, *A New Kind of Arctic Power?*, p. 73.

- 44 Sergey Aristov, "The Ministry of Transport is paying special attention to the development of Arctic territories", Arctic Info (11 January 2013), downloaded from <http://www.arctic-info.com/Regions/196/ExpertOpinion/11-01-2013/the-ministry-of-transport-is-paying-special-attention-to-the-development-of-arctic-territories>.
- 45 "Good neighborly relations are Russia's priority in Arctic – security chief", RT (8 August 2014). Russia's first submission of claims to CLCS in 2001 was turned down because of missing documentation.
- 46 "Danmarks krav i arktis går helt til Ruslands søgrænse" ("Denmark's Claim in the Arctic Goes All the Way to Russia's Sea Limit"), Berlingske Tidende (15 December 2014). (In Danish)
- 47 Russia ratified UNCLOS on 12 March 1997. The treaty opened for signature in 1982 but first went into force in 1994. Ekaterina Klimenko, "Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy: Drivers, Challenges and New Opportunities", SIPRI Policy Paper 42 (2014), p. 1.
- 48 UN's Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), downloaded on 13 August 2014 from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=23084>.
- 49 UN's Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Klaus Dodds, "Flag Planting and Finger Pointing: The Law of the Sea, the Arctic and the Political Geographies of the Outer Continental Shelf", *Political Geography*, 29 (2010), p. 63.
- 50 Dmitry Gorenburg, "Russian Interests and Policies in the Arctic" (2014), Warontherocks.com.
- 51 Nils Wang, "Samarbejde møder forhindringer i Arktis" (Cooperation Meets Obstacles in the Arctic), *Udenrigs*, 2 (2014), p. 27. (In Danish)
- 52 Kristian Åtland, "Russia's Armed Forces and the Arctic: All Quiet at the Northern Front?", *Contemporary Security Policy*, 32/1 (2011), p. 269.
- 53 Vladimir Putin, "Meeting of the Security Council on State Policy in the Arctic", (22 April 2014), downloaded on 1 June 2014 from <http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/news/7065>.
- 54 Thomas Ambrosio, *Authoritarian Backlash: Russian Resistance to Democratization in the Former Soviet Union* (Burlington: Ashgate 2010).
- 55 The Russian oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who was the main shareholder in the private oil company Yukos, was arrested on 25 October 2003 and charged with tax evasion and theft of public property. The case is considered by most analysts as a show trial that dealt with putting a potentially dangerous political opponent out of play and making an example to keep Russian business out of politics. See, for example, Jørgen Staun, "Siloviki versus Liberal Technocrats: The Fight for Russia and its Foreign Policy", DIIS Report, 9 (København: Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier 2007); Otto Luchterhandt, "Rechtsnihilismus in Aktion. Der Jukos-Chodorkovskij-Prozess in Moskau", *Osteuropa*, 55/7 (2005), pp. 7-37.
- 56 Olga Kryshnanovskaya and Stephen White, "Inside the Putin Court: A Research Note", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 57/7 (2005), pp. 1065-1075.
- 57 Therefore in keeping with, for example, the classic realist Henry Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1948) or in keeping with the neorealist Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House 1979).
- 58 Bobo Lo has described the Russian picture of the world as "a Hobbesian understanding of the world as an essentially hostile and 'anarchic' place; fear of encirclement by outside forces; and a strategic culture dominated by the geopolitical triad of zero-sum calculus, the balance of power and spheres of influence". Lo cited from Angela E. Stent, "Restoration and Revolution in Putin's Foreign Policy", *Europe-Asia Studies* 60/6 (2008), pp. 1089-1106. A characteristic that best fits the eurasianists and "great power normalizers".
- 59 Alfred B. Evans, Jr., "Putin's Legacy and Russia's Identity", *Europe-Asia Studies* 60/6 (2008), p. 902.
- 60 The starting signal for the changed foreign policy was the court case against the Russian oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky and his oil company Yukos in 2003-2004.
- 61 The renationalization has thus guaranteed Putin's inner circle great influence with the large state conglomerates dealing with the gas, oil and military industries and the banking sector – an influence that, according to a long line of critics, generates lucrative remuneration in the form of money under the table in connection with state orders, purchases or sales. Amongst the most well-known cases is the state oil company Rosneft's takeover of most of Khodorkovsky's oil company Yukos, after he was arrested in 2003 and Yukos was presented with an alleged tax liability of 28 billion dollars. Shortly before Christmas 2003, one of the Yukos subsidiaries, Yuganskneftegaz, was sold far below the market price in a closed state auction, in which the only bid came from the shelf corporation Baikal Finance Group, whose chairman was Igor Sechin, Putin's right hand. Baikal Finance Group was bought a few days later by Rosneft. Jørgen Staun, *Siloviki versus Liberal Technocrats*. See also Boris Nemtsov and Vladimir Milov, *Putin and Gazprom: An independent expert report*, [http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/data/docs/Viewpoints/Putin%20and%20Gazprom\\_Nemtsov%20en%20Milov.pdf](http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/data/docs/Viewpoints/Putin%20and%20Gazprom_Nemtsov%20en%20Milov.pdf), downloaded on 10 September 2012. On 28 July 2014,

the Russian state was ordered by the international Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague to pay 50 billion dollars in damages to the former owners of Yukos for having de facto expropriated the company. Russian Deputy Finance Minister Sergei Storchak, however, has stated that Russia will appeal the case. "Russia to Appeal Yukos Verdict Within 3 months", IntelliNews, ISI Emerging Markets (31 July 2014).

62 Gleb Yarovoy, Alexander Serguinin and Lassi Heininen, "Russia's Energy Strategies in the Arctic", Valdai International Discussion Club (2013), downloaded on 5 November 2014 from <http://valdaiclub.com/economy/59747.html>.

63 Ekaterina Klimenko, Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy, p. 6.

64 Ben Judah, *Fragile Empire: How Russia Fell In and Out of Love with Vladimir Putin* (London: Yale University Press 2014), p. 123.

65 Here Judah is thus in line with, for example, Bobo Lo and Dmitri Trenin, "The Landscape of Russian Foreign Policy Decision-making" (Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Centre 2005), p. 9. The Russian sociologist Olga Kryshstanovskaya, on the other hand, divides the Kremlin into three factions, namely 1) The Family (Boris Yeltsin's people), 2) The St. Petersburgers – Putin's friends and confidants from the time in St. Petersburg – and 3) the chiefs of the power ministries, i.e. confidants with backgrounds in the security service, the police or the military (siloviki), see Olga Kryshstanovskaya, *Anatomie der russischen Elite. Die Militarisierung Russlands unter Putin* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch 2005). A similar distinction is used in Margareta Mommsen, *Wer herrscht in Russland? Der Kreml und die Schatten der Macht* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck 2003), p. 103. Lilia Shevtsova, in turn, distinguishes between "apparatchniki", "siloviki", "bureaucrats" and "big business". Lilia Shevtsova, "Russland im Jahr 2006. Die Elite stellt sich auf für den Kampf um die Sicherung ihrer Machtpositionen", *Russlandanalysen* (122/06 2006). I consider this distinction as unproductive, as many of the top people thereby fall in two or more groups. For a discussion of how these power groupings relate to foreign policy, see, for example, Jørgen Staun, *Siloviki versus Liberal Technocrats*.

66 Thus, there is, for example, the circle around those who knew Putin well in his younger days in St. Petersburg, people such as, for example, Gennady Timchenko and the brothers Boris and Arkady Rotenberg, who trained judo with Putin. Timchenko has thus, until summer 2014, the day before the EU sanctions aimed at him were imposed, been the official owner (rumours have it as perhaps merely co-owner together with Putin) of the oil export company Gunvor, which is responsible for approximately a third of Rosneft's oil sales abroad. The Rotenberg brothers have become billionaires with the sale of pipelines to Gazprom. Then there is the circle around the civilians Putin got to know in his time at Leningrad University and while he worked for St. Petersburg's first mayor, Anatoly Sobchak, people such as Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, former Minister of Economic Development German Gref and former Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin. Then there are St. Petersburg's siloviki with, for example, Deputy Prime Minister and chief of Rosneft Igor Sechin, the long-time Russian Railways chief Vladimir Yakunin, former Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov, the former chief of FSB and current chairman of the national Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev.

67 Graham Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis", *The American Political Science Review*, 63/3 (1969), pp. 689-718.

68 See, for example, Marshall I. Goldman, *The Piratization of Russia: Russian Reform Goes Awry* (London: Routledge 2003).

69 Dmitri Trenin and Bobo Lo, *The Landscape*, p. 9.

70 Jørgen Staun, *Weekendavisen* (14 March 2014).

71 Ben Judah, 2014, *Behind the Scenes in Putin's Court: The Private Habits of a Latter-Day Dictator*, *Newsweek*, (23 July 2014).

72 Jørgen Staun, *Weekendavisen* (14 March 2014). One interpretation, which in connection with the West's discussions of sanctions against Russia, including against persons who possibly were involved in the decision to go into Crimea, was countered by Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, who emphasized that Putin "was the only person who could and had to make it and who made it." Dmitry Peskov, *Voice of Russia* (20 April 2014), [http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014\\_04\\_20/Decision-on-Crimea-made-solely-by-Putin-Kremlin-spokesperson-4017/](http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014_04_20/Decision-on-Crimea-made-solely-by-Putin-Kremlin-spokesperson-4017/).

73 Mark Galeotti and Ben Judah, *The Power Vertical Podcast*, RFE/RL (26 September 2014), downloaded on 3 October 2014 from <http://www.rferl.org/content/podcast-fear-and-foreboding-in-the-kremlin-court/26608005.html>.

74 The Russian national Security Council's permanent members include the President, the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Interior Minister as well as the director of FSB.

75 Baev, *Russia's Arctic Ambition*, p. 270; Pavel Baev, "Russia's Arctic Policy and the Northern Fleet Modernization", *IFRI, Russie.Nei: Visions*, 66 (2012), p. 16.

76 The Russian-Finnish businessman Gennady Timchenko, who is married to a Finn and lives in Switzerland, is considered by many to have been, for many years, one of the money men behind Vladimir Putin, for example via the oil export company Gunvor Group. A number of his companies, including, amongst others, Gunvor Group and Volga

Group, were hit by sanctions from the USA on 20 March 2014. But Timchenko managed to sell his 44 percent stake of the shares in Gunvor Group the day before the sanctions took effect. Business Week, "Why the U.S. Is Targeting the Business Empire of a Putin Ally", (28 April 2014). People from the Russian opposition often claim that the circle of persons around Putin have used their connections to Russia's top decisions to guarantee themselves – and Putin – vast riches. In addition to Gunvor Group, most often mentioned is Bank Rossiya, about which it is claimed that it "it is not really a bank, but an instrument used by Putin and friends for control and embezzlement." Judah, *Fragile Empire*, p. 122. The Obama administration is more straightforward and describes Bank Rossiya as Putin's and his friends' "personal bank". International New York Times, "Private Bank Fuels Fortunes of Putin's Inner Circle" (27 September 2014).

77 Moscow Times, "Even Russia's Oligarchs Suffer Under its Flailing Economy" (11 December 2014).

78 Ekaterina Klimenko, "Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy: Drivers, Challenges and New Opportunities", SIPRI Policy Paper 42 (2014), p. 17.

79 Rowe and Blakkisrud, "A New Kind of Arctic Power?", p. 76.

80 Rowe and Blakkisrud, "A New Kind of Arctic Power?", p. 82.

81 Michael L. Roi, "Russia: The Greatest Arctic Power?", *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 23 (2010), p. 551.

82 Vladimir Putin, "Speech of Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Munich Conference on Security Policy" (10 February 2007), downloaded from [www.kremlin.ru](http://www.kremlin.ru).

83 The concept "great power normalization" refers to Andrei Tsygankov's concept "Great power Normalizers" (Andrei P. Tsygankov, "Finding a Civilisational Idea: 'West,' 'Eurasia,' and 'Euro-East' in Russia's Foreign Policy", *Geopolitics*, 12 March 2007, pp. 375-399) and has great similarity with the concept neo-imperialism, which I have previously used to characterize the Russian foreign policy thinking. Staun, Siloviki versus Liberal Technocrats; Jørgen Staun, "Ruslands udenrigspolitik: Fra Jeltsins versterisering til Putins nyimperialisme" ("Russia's Foreign Policy: From Yeltsin's Westernization to Putin's Neo-Imperialism"), DIIS-Report, 12 (København: Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier 2008). The neo-imperialist concept, however, has, at times had an unfortunate ring to it in the public, in which there has been greater emphasis on "imperialism" than the prefix "neo", which is why I, at times, use the concept "great power normalization", in full knowledge that great powers far from always act the same – compare, for example, today's Germany and today's Russia. Therefore, when all is said and done, it is difficult to talk about normal behaviour for great powers, as classic IR realists do.

84 Anatoly Reshetnikov, "'Great Projects' Politics in Russia. History's Hardly Victorious End", *Demokratizatsiya* 19/2 (2011), p. 154; Mark Bassin and Konstantin E. Aksenov, "Mackinder and the Heartland Theory in Post-Soviet Geopolitical Discourse", *Geopolitics*, 11/1 (2006), p. 100.

85 Sergey Lavrov, "Sources and Traditions of Russian Diplomacy", speech at conference in Moscow on 24 March 2007, here cited from Andrei P. Tsygankov, "Russia's International Assertiveness: What Does It Mean for the West?", *Problems of Post-Communism*, 55/2 (2008), p. 46; see also Russian National Security Concept (2000), p. 1, downloaded on 27 September 2012 from <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/36aba64ac09f737fc32575d9002bbf31!OpenDocument>; The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, (2008), p. 1, downloaded on 27 September 2012 from <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>.

86 Vladimir Putin, "Speech of Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Munich Conference on Security Policy" (10 February 2007), downloaded from [www.kremlin.ru](http://www.kremlin.ru).

87 Vladimir Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium", originally printed in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (30 December 1999), [http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4\\_millennium.html](http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millennium.html); here referenced from the English version on [pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/putin.htm](http://pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/putin.htm).

88 The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (28 June 2000), p. 1, downloaded on 22 September 2014 from <http://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm>.

89 The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (12 July 2008), downloaded on 22 September 2014 from <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>.

90 Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020 (12 May 2009), downloaded on 22 September 2014 from <http://rustrans.wikidot.com/russia-s-national-security-strategy-to-2020>.

91 Dmitri Mevedev, "Statement on the Situation in South Ossetia at the Meeting with Veterans of the Battle of Kursk" (18 August 2008), [www.kremlin.ru/eng](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng).

92 Dmitri Medvedev, "Opening Address at the Meeting of the State Council on the Situation around South Ossetia and Abkhazia" (6 September 2008), downloaded from [www.kremlin.ru](http://www.kremlin.ru).

93 Carl Schmitt, *Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung mit Interventionsverbot für raumfremde Mächte. Ein Beitrag zum Reichsbegriff im Völkerrecht* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1991).

94 Vladimir Putin, "Address by President of the Russian Federation" (18 March 2014), downloaded on 10 August

2014 from <http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/news/6889>.

95 As Russia's UN ambassador Vitaly Churkin expressed it in 2012, NATO's enforcement of the no-fly zone over Libya transformed into "bombing of oil refineries, television stations and other civilian sites." Vitaly Churkin cited from Saira Mohamed, "The UN Security Council and the Crisis in Syria", *Insights*, 16/11 (26 March 2012), p. 2.

96 Vladimir Putin, "Address by President of the Russian Federation" (18 March 2014), downloaded on 10 August 2014 from <http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/news/6889>.

97 Vladimir Putin, "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly" (4 December 2014).

98 BBC, "Ukraine Crisis: Russia Demands Guarantees from NATO" (18 November 2014).

99 Nikolai Patrushev, "Cold War II: Nikolai Patrushev: The 'Sobering Up of the Ukrainians Will Be Harsh and Painful'", *Rossiskaja Gazeta* (15 October 2014). Translated to English by BBC Monitoring (16 October 2014), "Russian security official sees return to Cold War in US foreign policy".

100 Sergei Markov, a political analyst close to Putin, also puts forward the idea that the West stood behind the unrest in Kiev that resulted in the coup against Viktor Yanukovich at the end of February 2014. Sergei Markov, "Hotet från Ryssland: Baltstaterna ska vara rädda", *SVT* (11 November 2014), downloaded from <http://www.svt.se/nyheter/varlden/estland-och-lettland-ska-vara-radda-for-oss>.

101 An assumption that Putin, to a certain extent, is thought to share. Asked by Chinese journalists before his official visit in China in connection with the 2014 meeting of APEC leaders about which factors, in his eyes, had influence on the falling world market price of oil, he answered that the obvious reason was, of course, the stagnation in economic growth and that the strategic and commercial oil reserves in the undeveloped countries were at their highest level, etc. But afterwards he said, "In addition, a political component is always present in oil prices. Furthermore, at some moments of crisis it starts to feel like it is the politics that prevails in the pricing of energy resources." Vladimir Putin, "Interview to China's Leading Media Companies", (6 November 2014), p. 2. Downloaded on 13 November 2014 from <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/23193>.

102 The first region that was chosen to leave Russia was, for that matter, the north Caucasus, where the Chechen "extremists and their supporters in Russia were offered support by the special services of Britain, the United States, and allies in Europe and the Islamic world" (Patrushev, Cold War II).

103 Russia is so optimistic with regard to the increased ship traffic in the Arctic region that Russia's Transport Ministry, in 2012, opened an office in Moscow that will be responsible for issuance of shipping permissions for the northern sea route (Severny Morskoy Put or Sevmorput).

104 Märta Carlsson and Niklas Granholm, "Russia and the Arctic: Analysis and Discussion of Russian Strategies", FOI, (2013), pp. 15-25.

105 The Arctic strategy from Russia's national Security Council: Sovet bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii (2009), "Osnovy gosudarstvennoi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Arktike na period do 2020 goda i dalsneishiuo perspektivu", <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/98.html>. Downloaded on 16 January 2014, article 2. Here referred to from an English version downloaded on 4 November 2014 from <http://www.arctis-search.com/Russian+Federation+Policy+for+the+Arctic+to+2020>.

106 Sovet bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii (2009), "Strategia natsionalnoi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii do 2020 goda". Downloaded on 16 January 2014 from <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/99.html>. Document nos. 11, 42 and 62. The national security strategy will not be gone through in the following, as it has already been discussed in the run-through of Russia's overall foreign policy goals.

107 Ministerstvo energetiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (2009), "Energeticheskaia strategiiia Rossii na period do 2030 goda". Here referred to from the English version, downloaded on 6 November 2014 from [http://www.energystrategy.ru/projects/docs/ES-2030\\_\(Eng\).pdf](http://www.energystrategy.ru/projects/docs/ES-2030_(Eng).pdf).

108 Ministerstvo transporta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (2008), "Transportnaia strategiiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii na period do 2030 goda". Downloaded on 16 January 2014 from [http://www.mintrans.ru/upload/iblock/3cc/ts\\_proekt\\_16102008.pdf](http://www.mintrans.ru/upload/iblock/3cc/ts_proekt_16102008.pdf).

109 The Arctic strategy (2009), point 4.

110 The Arctic strategy (2009), point 4.

111 The Arctic strategy (2009), point 6.

112 The Arctic strategy (2009). Here referred to from Carlsson and Granholm, *Russia and the Arctic*, p. 15.

113 Carlsson and Granholm, *Russia and the Arctic*, p. 16.

114 Alexander Pelyasov, Russian Strategy of the Development of the Arctic Zone and the Provision of National Security until 2020 (adopted by the President of the Russian Federation on February 8, 2013, № Pr-232), downloaded from <http://www.arcticyearbook.com/index.php/commentaries-2013/74-russian-strategy-%20of-the-development-of-the-arctic-zone-and-the-provision-of-national-security-until-2020-adopted-by-the-%20president-of-the-russian-federation-on-february-8-2013-pr-232>.

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- 116 Marlene Laruelle, "Resource, State Reassertion and International Recognition: Locating the Drivers of Russia's Arctic Policy", *The Polar Journal*, 4/2 (2014), p. 254.
- 117 Carlsson and Granholm, *Russia and the Arctic*, pp. 19-20.
- 118 Laruelle, *Resource, State Reassertion and International Recognition*, p. 257.
- 119 Which is one of the objectives of Russia's foreign policy objectives, compare Russia's Foreign Policy Concept, no. 34 f. Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (12 February 2013), downloaded on 22 September 2014 from <http://www.mid.ru/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/869c9d2b87ad8014c32575d9002b1c38?OpenDocument>.
- 120 Carlsson and Granholm, *Russia and the Arctic*, p. 20.
- 121 "Court Orders Russia to Pay \$50 Billion for Seizing Yukos Assets", *Reuters* (28 July 2014), downloaded on 24 October 2014 from <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/07/28/uk-russia-yukos-idUKKBN0FX08M20140728>.
- 122 Carlsson and Granholm, *Russia and the Arctic*, p. 23.
- 123 For an overview of the EU's sanctions against Russia, see: [http://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/eu\\_sanctions/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/eu_sanctions/index_en.htm). For an overview of the American sanctions against Russia, see: <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/ukrainerussia/>.
- 124 Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*, p. 17.
- 125 Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*, p. 19.
- 126 Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*, p. 19.
- 127 Kristian Åtland, "Russia's Armed Forces and the Arctic: All Quiet at the Northern Front?", *Contemporary Security Policy*, 32/1 (2011) p. 277.
- 128 Laruelle, *Russian Military Presence*, p. 71.
- 129 Märta Carlsson, "De ryska marinstridskrafterna", *FOI Memo 3770* (May 2012), p. 3.
- 130 "Russia to Prioritize Modern Weaponry in New Arms Acquisition Programme", *RIA Novosti* (11 March 2011), downloaded on 30 October 2014 from [http://en.ria.ru/military\\_news/201110311/162956743.html](http://en.ria.ru/military_news/201110311/162956743.html).
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- 132 Åtland, *Russia's Armed Forces and the Arctic*, p. 267.
- 133 Carlsson and Granholm, *Russia and the Arctic*, p. 28.
- 134 Åtland, *Russia's Armed Forces and the Arctic*, p. 268.
- 135 Åtland, *Russia's Armed Forces and the Arctic*, pp. 268, 283.
- 136 Carlsson & Granholm, *Russia and the Arctic*, p. 30.
- 137 According to the long-time Russia observer Claus Mathiesen of the Royal Danish Defence College, the Donskoi does not really enter into the Northern Fleet's striking force, as it exclusively functions as a test submarine for trial runs of weapons systems, first and foremost the unlucky Bulava missile. Personal conversation with Claus Mathiesen, 8 December 2014.
- 138 Åtland, *Russia's Armed Forces and the Arctic*, p. 279.
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- 146 "Russia to Get 'Full Radar Coverage of the Arctic' by End of Year to Encounter 'Unwanted Guests'", *The Siberian Times* reporter (5 November 2014), downloaded 5 November 2014 from <http://siberiantimes.com/other/others/news/n0004-russia-to-get-full-radar-coverage-of-the-arctic-by-end-of-year-to-counter-unwanted-guests/>.
- 147 Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*, p. 25.
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