3 Unboxing Arctic Security Relations and Dynamics

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Introduction

Few places have given rise to so much speculation, hype, and sweeping generalizations as the Arctic region at the start of the 21st century. Propelled onto the agenda by flag plantings and resource appraisals a decade ago, the Arctic continues to lure researchers and journalists to venture northwards to "the next great game" (Dadwal, 2014).

However, ideas of the Arctic as an arena for political competition and rivalry are often juxtaposed with the view of the Arctic as a region of harmony and shared interests. Underpinning cooperation in the Arctic is a desire to ensure stable operating environments for extracting costly resources far away from their prospective markets, and the foreign ministries of the Arctic states repeatedly highlight cooperation (Heininen et al., 2020; Lavrov and Støre, 2010; Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2017). Scholars point to the different layers of Arctic cooperation and emphasize that the Artic has generally remained a zone of cooperation, even after the deterioration in relations between Russia and the West after 2014 (Byers, 2017; Elgsaas, 2019; Østhagen, 2016; Stephen and Knecht, 2017).

The common point in these two diverging views on Arctic political relations is the tendency to describe dynamics in the entire circumpolar region with one stroke of the brush. With rhetoric about Arctic security threats intensifying over the past decade, security challenges are seen as coherent across the circumpolar North (Jegorova, 2013; Lanteigne, 2016; Padrtová, 2017), and scholars and media alike increasingly refer to the Arctic as one region, where various types of state security interests are inherently intertwined (Borgerson, 2008; Huebert, 2013; Weber, 2015).

Security studies offer multiple approaches to the study of specific regions. An underlying assumption has been that the security concerns and priorities of states located within a region are interlinked and overlapping. Regional relations between actors may compound over time, giving rise to patterns that may not make sense from a purely systemic point of view (Frazier and Stewart-Ingersoll, 2010; Kelly, 2007). The case of the Arctic is well suited to examining the idea of a "security region." What are the characteristics of the Arctic in terms of military and state security (for more on definitions of security, see, e.g., Hoogensen Gjørv

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et al., 2014)? Does the Arctic, as a region, share security interests and concerns—and why should that matter?

This chapter unpacks the nuances of traditional security concerns and dynamics in the Arctic in order to better understand recent developments and questions some of the assumptions underlying the concept of (security) regions more broadly. Moreover, by introducing a "level of analysis"—or, in other words, by making distinctions between state interactions that take place at different levels in the international arena (e.g., Singer, 1961; Soltani, 2014; Waltz, 1959)—we can move away from broad, sweeping generalizations on regional relations and advance the way we understand and describe security dynamics in the Arctic at different levels (for more, see Østhagen, 2021).

Unpacking the different levels of Arctic (Geo)politics

To understand how the various security region concepts fit with the Arctic in the 21st century, it is purposeful to separate them into three different levels of analysis. Naturally, these are not watertight divisions, with each level influencing the others. Yet they help tease out some of the nuances of Arctic geopolitics and unearth the security dynamics that are prevalent at different levels of international politics.

The regional (Arctic) level

As the Cold War's systemic overlay faded away, regional interaction and cooperation in the North flourished. Furthermore, as the melting ice at the turn of the millennium opened up opportunities for greater maritime activity (shipping, fisheries, oil and gas exploration and exploitation), the Arctic states began to look northwards in terms of investments as well as presence. Climate change was leading to accelerated ice melting in the north, which, coupled with high oil prices and positive estimates of the region's hydrocarbon resources (Hobér, 2011; United States Geological Survey, 2008), resulted in portrayals of the Arctic as the world's new energy frontier and northern "shortcut" to Asia (Ho, 2011; Humpert, 2013).

In particular, Russia's ambitions concerning the Northern Sea Route require presence as regards both military and civilian infrastructure and capacity (Konyshev and Sergunin, 2014; Sergunin and Konyshev, 2014; Wilson Rowe and Blakkisrud, 2014). The other Arctic states have been following suit; with more and more of their northern waters remaining ice-free for longer periods, establishing a forward presence through coast guards, patrol aircraft, and exercises has become a challenge and priority for all Arctic littoral states (Østhagen, 2020).

As the Arctic states—Canada, Denmark (via Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US—placed the North on their domestic and foreign policy agendas, and non-Arctic states like China, France, Japan, South Korea, and the UK expressed interest in the north, predictions foresaw the region as the next arena for "geopolitical" conflict (Borgerson, 2008; Dadwal, 2014; Grindheim, 2009; Sale and Potapov, 2010). However, a range of studies have

pointed out that many Arctic predictions have proved inaccurate, whether made before or after the deterioration in relations with Russia and the drop in oil prices in 2014. Over the past decade, scholars have produced more balanced accounts of the dynamics within the region as a whole and among the actors with stakes in the Arctic (e.g., Dodds and Nuttall, 2016; Greaves and Lackenbauer, 2016; Łuszczuk, 2016; Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2017; Tamnes and Offerdal, 2014).

In particular, the Arctic states are recognized as mutually dependent in creating a political environment favorable to investments and economic development (Østhagen, 2018). In response to the outcry and concerns about the "lack of governance" in the Arctic spurred by the growing international awareness of the region, political representatives of the Arctic states have continued to declare the Arctic to be a region of cooperation through venues such as the Arctic Council (Jacobsen, 2018). Foreign ministries in the Arctic states actively emphasize the "peaceful" and "cooperative" features of the region (Heininen et al., 2020; Wilson Rowe, 2020). The deterioration in relations between Russia and the other Arctic states that started in 2014 has not changed this (Byers, 2017; Østhagen, 2016).

The emergence of the Arctic Council as the primary forum for regional affairs in the Arctic plays into this setting (Graczyk and Rottem, 2020). The Arctic states have shown a preference for a stable political environment in which they maintain dominance in the region. This is supported by the importance attributed to the Law of the Sea and issue-specific agreements signed under the auspices of the Arctic Council. These developments benefit the Northern countries in particular, while also ensuring that Arctic issues are generally dealt with by the Arctic states themselves.

The international (systemic) level

What happens *in* the Arctic is one thing, but politics *over* the Arctic are another. During the Cold War, the Arctic held a prominent place in the political and military standoffs between the two superpowers. It was important not only because of interactions in the Arctic itself, but also because of its strategic role in the systemic competition between the US and the Soviet Union. Norway was one of only two *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO) countries (the other being Turkey) that shared a land border with the Soviet Union. Alaska was also in proximity to the far-eastern region of Russia, albeit separated by the Bering Strait. Greenland and Iceland held strategic positions in the North Atlantic, and the Kola Peninsula was—and still is—central in Russian military planning, given its unrestricted access to the Atlantic.

With the end of the Cold War, the Arctic was transformed from a region of geopolitical rivalry to one where Russia would be included in various cooperative arrangements with its former adversaries (see discussion above). Subsequently, although interaction among Arctic states and Arctic peoples increased in this period, the region disappeared from the geopolitical radar and lost its systemic importance beyond its significance to these Northern countries themselves.

Over the last 15 years, the strategic importance of the North has risen again. Recalling some of the dynamics of the Cold War, the strategic importance of the Arctic has evolved primarily because Russia is intent on reestablishing its military power at large, and the Arctic is one domain where it can do so basically unobstructed (Hilde, 2014, pp. 153–155). This comes not necessarily because of the Arctic itself, but because of Russia's dominant position in the North, with its Northern Fleet based on the Kola Peninsula, base for the strategic submarines essential to the county's status as a nuclear power on the world stage (Sergunin and Konyshev, 2014, p. 75).

Furthermore, unlike during the Cold War, China has now emerged as an Arctic actor. With Beijing continuing to assert its influence on the world stage, the Arctic is one of many regions where China's presence and interaction are components of an expansion of power in both soft and hard terms (e.g., Bennett, 2017; Guo and Wilson, 2020; Ye, 2014). China has described itself as a "near-Arctic state" a s a way of legitimizing involvement from Beijing (Koivurova et al., 2020, p. 26). This is linked partly to Chinese interests, such as research and investments, but also to its position as an emerging superpower (see Koivurova and Kopra, 2020; Sun, 2014). Safeguarding Chinese interests, which range from businesses to opinions on developments related to the Law of the Sea, is part of this expansion of power (Willis and Depledge, 2014; Ye, 2014).

Although China is not an Arctic state, its growing global stature has triggered challenges, particularly from the US. Marking a shift in the cooperative Arctic rhetoric, in May 2019, US Secretary of State Pompeo lambasted both Russia and China in a speech held before the ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council (United States Department of State, 2019), and one month later the US Department of Defense (DoD) heavily criticized the same states in its updated Arctic Strategy (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, 2019, p. 5). Pompeo's warning—that Beijing's Arctic activity risks creating a "new South China Sea" ("US warns Beijing's Arctic activity risks creating 'new South China Sea'", 2019)—shows how the US sees the Arctic as yet another arena where the emerging systemic competition between the two countries is intensifying (e.g., Tunsjø, 2018).

In other words, much of the increase in tension that we have witnessed in the Arctic—be it between NATO and Russia since 2014 or between the US and China since 2018/2019—has little do with events *in* the Arctic and everything to do with relations between these actors globally. The Arctic plays a role in these increasingly competitive relationships due to its military importance for Russia and to Chinese global economic interests in the North.

The national level

One can describe the overarching Arctic security environment in sweeping, general statements, depicting it as either driven by strategic interests and competition or dominated by regional cooperation and shared interests. However, it is important to probe deeper into the metrics of the Arctic security concerns of

each actor. These are, naturally, informed by the two levels already outlined. Still, to disentangle the security dynamics of the Arctic region, we must consider how the Arctic states actually interact on a regular basis.

Central here is the role the Arctic plays in considerations of national defense. This varies greatly across the Arctic, with vast divergence in what each country chooses to prioritize and target in its northern areas in terms of national security and defense (Hilde, 2014). For Russia, the Arctic is integral to national defense considerations (Sergunin, 2014). Although these are—as described—chiefly linked to developments elsewhere, investments in military infrastructure in the Arctic have an Arctic impact, particularly for countries located close to Russia (in essence, Finland, Norway, and Sweden). For the Nordic countries, the Arctic is fundamental to national defense policy, precisely because this is where Russia—as a great power—invests considerable military capacity (Jensen, 2017; Saxi, 2011).

In North America, the Arctic arguably does not play the same seminal role in national security considerations. The Arctic has primarily been the location for missile defense capabilities, surveillance infrastructure, and a limited number of strategic forces (Østhagen et al., 2018). Many commentators argue that the most immediate concerns facing the Canadian Arctic are not defense capabilities, but the social and health conditions in Northern communities and the poor rates of economic development (Greaves and Lackenbauer, 2016). Alaska has a somewhat more prominent role in US defense policy, given its proximity to the Russian region of Chukotka across the Bering Strait; however, this cannot be compared to the role of the Russian land border in Norwegian (and NATO) security concerns (e.g., Østhagen et al., 2018).

A geographical dividing line falls between the European Arctic and the Arctic, in tandem with variations in climatic conditions. The Northern Norwegian and the Northwestern Russian coastlines are ice-free during winter, but ice—even though it is receding—remains a constant factor in the Alaskan, Canadian, and Greenlandic Arctic. Due to the sheer size and inaccessibility of the region, the impact of security issues on either side of the dividing line is, in turn, relatively low. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, Russian investments in Arctic troops and infrastructure have had little impact on the North American security outlook at large. Flyovers by Russian bombers and fighter planes may cause alarm, but the real threat to the North American states in the Arctic is limited (Lasserre and Têtu, 2016).

It is therefore difficult to generalize about how Arctic countries themselves perceive and respond to their security interests and challenges across the circumpolar North. Security—and essentially defense—dynamics in the Arctic remain anchored to the subregional and bilateral level. Of these, the Barents Sea and European Arctic stand out. Here, bilateral relations between Russia and Norway are especially challenging in terms of security interactions and concerns. Norway, a small state and NATO member, borders on a Russia intent on investing in the Arctic for regional and strategic purposes.

Since 2014, defense aspects have made relations increasingly tense, with bellicose rhetoric and a surge in military exercises (Friis, 2019; Norwegian Intelligence

Service, 2020). With Russia intent on reestablishing the prominence of its Northern Fleet, primarily for strategic purposes (albeit also with an eye toward regional development), Norway—whose defense posture is defined by the situation in its northern areas—faces a more challenging security environment (Sfraga et al., 2020).

However, bilateral dynamics—as in the case of Norway-Russia—are always multifaceted. The two states also engage in various types of cooperation, ranging from the management of fish stocks to search-and-rescue operations and border crossings. In 2010, Norway and Russia resolved a four-decades-long maritime boundary dispute in the Barents Sea, partly in order to be able to initiate joint petroleum ventures in the disputed area (Moe et al., 2011). From 2012, Norwegians and Russians living less than 30 kilometers from the border have been able to travel across the border without a visa. These cooperative arrangements and agreements have not been revoked after the events of 2014 (Østhagen, 2016; Rowe, 2018), a clear indication of the complexity of one of the most challenging bilateral relations in the Arctic.

The Arctic: an emerging security region?

In light of the above review of the three levels as well as the concept of security regions and regionalism more broadly, how can we better understand security dynamics in the Arctic? Some scholars have argued that we are witnessing the emergence of an Arctic security region, even a regional security complex, where military security interests are increasingly overlapping and intertwined (Lanteigne, 2016, p. 4; Padrtová, 2017, p. 1). The idea is that the security interests among Arctic states have become interlinked—that is, the actions of one actor impact the others—on a regional (Arctic) level.

Others argue that the foundation of the Arctic cooperative environment is not military security interests and overlap as it would be in a traditional security region; it is rather the *absence* of these concerns from general Arctic affairs—as with the specific exclusion of military security issues from the Arctic Council—that ensures peace and stability (Grønning, 2016; Rottem, 2017). As stated by Exner-Pirot (2013, p. 120), "the Arctic, fundamentally, is a regional security complex built around interdependence on environmental and ocean issues." According to Steinberg and Dodds (2015, p. 108), the Arctic is "increasingly a region that…has an institutional structure that encourages cooperation and consultation among states so as to facilitate commerce." Byers (2017, p. 394) notes that the Arctic "is of interest because Russian–Western relations in that region have been insulated, to some degree, from developments elsewhere." Keil (2013, p. 252), albeit writing before 2014, even moots the idea of a nascent Arctic security community.

During the Cold War, the entire region was subjected to superpower rivalry. The overlay of the systemic level overrode the concerns of regional players as the Arctic was turned into a frontline, complete with nuclear submarines and bombers. With the end of the Cold War, this systemic overlay receded and regional

politics emerged as a driving force in the region. Canada and Finland took the lead in founding the Arctic Council to promote their focus on environmental issues (Rottem, 2017), while the global hegemon—the US—became relatively disentangled from the region.

Today, Russia has reemerged as the most active Arctic state, investing in its Arctic capabilities for both military and civilian purposes. The US was initially a reluctant Arctic actor, but it has sharpened its focus on the region—at least rhetorically—since 2019 (Conley et al., 2020). If things were to change further, the US would be able to project its power into the Arctic. Furthermore, China is engaging in Arctic issues. China's focus comes not from a position of geographic proximity, but as a consequence of its general global outreach and engagement. In other words, in the case of being influenced by *systemic* developments and rivalry, the Arctic is not only similar to most parts of the world, but is also increasingly characterized by a so-called geostrategic competition that has very little to do with the Arctic in and of itself.

Where the idea of the Arctic as a traditional security region encounters problems is with *proximity*. The importance of the Arctic to national security and defense policies differs considerably from region to region *within* the Arctic. For example, looking at Canada and Norway, the contrasts stand out. Located on different continents, these two states are arguably only loosely connected (if at all) when it comes to national security interests. The border with Russia dominates Norwegian security concerns, but Norway's security concerns and neighbor relations do not stretch across the Atlantic or the Arctic to Canada (Østhagen et al., 2018). At best, the wider security context can be said to include the North East Atlantic, specifically Iceland and Greenland, which, along with the UK, were known during the Cold War as the GIUK gap (Smith et al., 2017). The basic principle that geographical proximity spurs mutual threat conceptions—what Buzan and Wæver (2003) call "interlinkages"—does not seem to hold up *across* the Arctic. This is a result of one simple but relevant fact: the distance between Norway and Canada is far too great, and Russia is also too far removed from Canada.

Furthermore, is it possible that the Arctic is bound into a single region by a security *externality*? Barring the existential threat posed by climate change, which falls outside the scope of this article's emphasis on state and military security, the most likely candidate would be a militarily resurgent Russia. With its annexation of Crimea, its investments in military installations across the Arctic, and its increasing number of military exercises in the North (Expert Commission, 2015, p. 20; Norum, 2018), might Russia be the shared security externality that forms an Arctic security region?

However, here again we see the dividing line defined by geography and proximity. As outlined by Østhagen et al. (2018), the countries' respective positions on NATO are indicative of differing threat perceptions. If concern about Russian behavior and investments is the key factor, then this security region would also include countries outside the Arctic, including most NATO members. Moreover, it does not make sense to have a "security region" where half of the geographic

domain in question—Russia—is not part of the shared security externality, but rather the source of it.

Turning to the different, yet linked, ideas of developing the Arctic into a "region," this approach seems the most fruitful for explaining *why* the Arctic is sometimes depicted as a security region despite the logical pitfalls outlined above. Foreign ministries in the Arctic countries (Wilson Rowe, 2020) as well as officials working with issues pertaining to the Arctic Council or other Arctic-specific entities seem to have had an interest in portraying the Arctic as a zone of cooperation (Heininen, 2012; Heininen et al., 2020).

The 2008 Ilulissat Declaration from the five Arctic littoral states, which was repeated in 2018, signaled to the world the explicit intention to solve potential disputes between states through diplomacy within the framework of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Jacobsen, 2018). The rebranding of the Arctic Council with the establishment of a permanent secretariat in Tromsø in Northern Norway, and the attendance at meetings by all ministers of foreign affairs from all Arctic countries in 2008–2009 (Rottem, 2014; Steinberg and Dodds, 2015), indicated such a pathway toward an Arctic "community" region.

Scholars have further gone on to highlight the cooperative features and the "uniqueness" of the Arctic region's amicable cooperation, while relations between the same actors deteriorated elsewhere (Berkman and Young, 2009; Byers, 2017; Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2017). These views are still held, despite the post-2014 souring of relations with Russia (Østhagen, 2016; Raspotnik, 2018; Stephen and Knecht, 2017).

The idea of a security region that appears most relevant in the Arctic context is consequently that of a normative region or a "constructed" region (after Neuman, 1994)—constructed, or built, by those actors engaged in Arctic studies, Arctic policy-making, and Arctic governance (see Keskitalo, 2004, 2007). Crucial here, however, is the fact that military security discussions did not figure to a great extent in these region-building efforts. The Arctic might indeed be a "region" in terms of dealing with issues ranging from economic development to climate change research, but in terms of military security no such region-building efforts have occurred.

Exemplifying this, the most pressing challenge in the Arctic in the 2020s is indeed how to deal with and talk about Arctic-specific (military) security concerns, which are excluded, for example, from the Arctic Council. The debate over what mechanisms are best suited to further expand security cooperation has been ongoing for a decade (Conley et al., 2012), with discussions about whether the Arctic Council should acquire a security component (Graczyk and Rottem, 2020; Grønning, 2016); others look to the Arctic Coast Guard Forum or more ad hoc venues (Østhagen, 2020; Sfraga et al., 2020). The Northern Chiefs of Defense Conference and the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable were initiatives established to this end in 2011/2012 (Depledge et al., 2019), but they fell apart after 2014.

In summary, descriptions of the Arctic that depict it as possessing its own regional security dynamics in the traditional sense clash with the realities of the

region: The Arctic Ocean is simply too vast and remote. Security dynamics in the Arctic have remained anchored to other national and regional levels: the Barents area, the Northwest Atlantic, and the Bering Sea/Strait area. From a normative understanding of security regions, however, a different picture emerges. The concept of a nascent security community concerning the Arctic was mentioned in the period between 2008 and 2014. Efforts by the foreign ministers of Arctic countries as well as by Arctic governance scholars to depict the Arctic as a special or sheltered region have also fed the view of the Arctic as a security community. However, these conceptualizations never covered traditional military security concerns. Moreover, they have been fracturing since 2014, and suffered a severe blow in 2019, with the US noting the growing possibility of "great power politics" influencing relations in the North.

Concluding remarks

The Arctic is increasingly being referred to as a "region" in which the security concerns and interests of states are interlinked and overlapping. The "region" label is frequently used, but without a proper analysis of what this label means and how it is linked to the notion of the region in international studies. In terms of national security, the desire to see the Arctic as a coherent region does not correlate with empirical facts. As has been shown here with regard to the immediate security threats perceived by Arctic states and the defense posture that follows, the Northern European and North American security domains are only marginally aligned. This fact contradicts arguments that the Arctic is a typical security region—it is simply too vast and inaccessible to fit the various definitions of a security region.

This article has also unpacked the various, and at times contradictory, security dynamics in the Arctic. Some dynamics are best understood through the threefold distinction presented here: international competition (why the US is increasingly focusing on China in an Arctic context), regional interaction (why Arctic states still meet to sign new agreements hailing the cooperative spirit of the North), and national defense (why some Arctic states and not others invest heavily in their northern defense posture).

What does this all mean when looking at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) toward 2035? We could envision that the Arctic states also engage in further region-building with a security focus. The SDGs, in particular number 13 on Climate Action and number 16 on Peace and Justice, might be used as relevant frameworks for joint efforts among the Arctic countries within the framework of the Arctic Council or otherwise. Moreover, SDG number 17 especially highlights international cooperation as a way of resolving many, if not most, of the issues that the goals target. This is also highly relevant for the Arctic states and how they deal with an array of security concerns, ranging from soft security to hard security. Indeed, more cooperation is needed, as Arctic political relations are fraying due to tense global security relations. Using the SDGs as umbrella mechanisms to spur on low-level cooperation—that, in turn, perhaps could

have positive effects on larger pan-Arctic political relations—is a feasible option. In that sense, goal number 17 is perhaps as pertinent to the Arctic as anywhere else, if not even more so.

Moreover, looking to 2035, perhaps the increased focus on security in the north might actually spur the Arctic states to make efforts to tackle regional security matters. Yet, leaning on the different levels of analysis, questions would arise regarding the level upon which to focus. For example, should the focus be placed on national defense concerns or on international strategic competition? As shown throughout this chapter, it is difficult to pinpoint pan-Arctic *military* security concerns that include *all* Arctic states – apart from, perhaps, a shared code of conduct (e.g., Boulègue, 2019).

The difficulties encountered in trying to establish an arena for security discussions indicate that this issue is highly sensitive to, and influenced by, events elsewhere. Any Arctic security dialogue is fragile, and risks being interpreted through the lens of the increasingly tense NATO-Russia division in the Arctic. Paradoxically, progress in developing such an arena is tricky precisely because of what the arena is intended to achieve: hindering the spillover of tensions from other parts of the world to the Arctic. Nevertheless, looking to 2035 and beyond, matters of Arctic security and the need for dialogue, guidelines, and frameworks will not be less relevant or less in demand.

In turn, what these nuances imply is that simplistic, one-liner descriptions of "Arctic security" must be taken with a pinch of salt. This should inspire further studies on security politics in a region that is at least as complex as any other part of the world.

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Ex-post reflections

The Russian invasion of Ukraine starting on February 24, 2022, naturally also changes the way we view and analyse Arctic security relations. This chapter was written before those events. However, the main points made in it still stand. The chapter argues among other things that the primary security variable in the Arctic is Russia-NATO (or, if you will, the West) relations. With the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, this is further exemplified, as fears of a spillover to the Arctic materialized. At the time of writing (May 2022), this has not happened in terms of direct security operations or warfare. Still, cooperative mechanisms such as the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro Arctic Council have been suspended. Bilateral cooperation between Russia and the other Arctic countries over a range of issues (economic, political, research) have also been suspended. Another point made in this chapter is that it is not sufficient to generalize across the vast circumpolar region when discussing immediate security concerns in the North. The Ukraine invasion further exemplifies this, as the security concerns of Norway—bordering on Russia's Northern Fleet—are perceived as much more immediate than the security concerns of Canada or Greenland. Still, in all Arctic non-Russian

spaces, discussion on defense and security emerged at the start of 2022. With Finland and Sweden deciding to join NATO, Arctic security relations at a systemic (global), regional (circumpolar), and national level will further change. No doubt, the Russian invasion of Ukraine was the final blow to the idea of Arctic "exceptionalism," that is, the Arctic is sheltered from security affairs elsewhere involving some of the same actors. However, this does not mean that the Arctic cannot be an area of cooperation and low tension, if Arctic states actively work toward that goal. Yet, looking toward 2035, the idea of security dialogue in the north involving Russia looks both more unlikely than before, and more needed.

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