



PragueMUN2019
3rd-7th February

STUDY GUIDE

NATO

(The North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

It's time to be UNique!



Prague, February 2019
Prague Model United Nations Conference

Model United Nations Prague z.s.
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Welcome Letter

Dear delegate,

We are kindly welcoming you to the PragueMUN 2019's NATO Committee. We are extremely happy to be overseeing the debate on one of the most pressing issues of our time. NATO is a committee, which requires a special set of skills and knowledge about the international community, as well as acquires many different perspectives on the international arena, depending on the country and the issue at hand. Since NATO is not a UN council, we would kindly ask you to prepare by closely reading the Rules of Procedure.

The Arctic has become an important part of the daily conversation in most international organizations, due to the challenges it brings to countries involved, as well as to the ones affected by the conflict. This year NATO will be involved in a crisis scenario. The crisis will give you an opportunity and a better outlook on the situation, as well as testing you in an unpredictable situation.

We are more than happy to welcome you to the Committee and to be alongside you, while you strive to make the world a better place.

Kind regards,

Marko Luković and Maša Mikić,

Presiding officers of NATO

Introduction to the NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a military and political alliance of countries from Europe and North America. Its main goal is the protection of the freedom and security of its 29-member states through political and military means. It promotes democratic values and encourages cooperation on security matters. Its commitment is the principle of collective defense, which means that an armed attack against one of its members is considered as an attack against all of them. In the event of armed attack, the Alliance will assist the victims with actions they deem necessary to restore and maintain security. The first and only invocation of the Article 5 was after the 11 September 2001 in response to terrorist attacks in the US. Established by 12 members after the World War II, on 4 April 1949, with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington D.C., NATO initially had the purpose of mutual self-defense (*casus foederis*) against the USSR. Since NATO summit in Lisbon the organization now focuses on countering threats by utilizing collective defence, managing crisis situations and encouraging cooperative security, as outlined in the 2010 Strategic Concept. NATO is not an UN-body, which means that the decision-making process and its outcome are different. NATO's primary political decision-making body is the North Atlantic Council. The Council can assemble on different levels; thus, it can be held at Permanent Representative Level, or can be composed of member states' Ministers of Defense or Heads of Government. In essence it is a body which brings together high-level representatives of members whose pressing issues and policies are then manifested in the communique. Unlike other UN committees, the outcome of NATO negotiations is a communiqué. Since a "NATO decision" means the expression of a collective will of all member countries the decisions require consensus.

Militarization of Arctic

Introduction to the Topic

The Arctic is the northernmost region in the world. Several states border the Arctic, which are the US, Russia, Canada, Norway, Denmark (through its strong connection with Greenland). The flag of the United Nations shows the North Pole as its center: from this perspective we can see in what close proximity the Arctic states are situated from one another. This geographical proximity can be seen as an interesting opportunity to develop international trade routes, shipping lanes and increase international co-operation. It can, however, also be seen as a potential threat leading to possible conflict.

As increasingly more states are becoming interested in the Arctic for strategic, economic, commercial and military purposes, rules and conventions, such as UNCLOS (United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea), gain importance to prevent possible open or covert conflict. From this perspective, several challenges can be discerned in today's situation in the Arctic region. First and foremost, the steadfast militarization of the Arctic causes tensions to rise and mutual distrust between states to grow. Secondly, growing international interest in the Arctic in terms of mineral mining, commercial shipping lanes and environmental research has resulted in an increasingly larger international presence in the region, which may also become cause for friction between countries. This friction could stem from claims from several countries to the same oil and gas deposits, or could be caused by the diverse views on shipping and mining. While some states may wish to launch serious mining expeditions, others may prefer the Arctic be left in peaceful tranquility, that the natural environment and wildlife would not become endangered by extensive fishing, mining and shipping. The third level of complexity to this conflict is found in the climate itself: the poles are heating up, the icecaps are melting, and the sea levels are rising. This provides for commercial and economic opportunities and impetus for international co-operation, as the Arctic could become a major shipping lane, and drilling for gas and oil underneath the ice becomes a feasible endeavor. Yet on the flipside, the potential threats and risks to the global environment are grave and very serious. Increasing human activity in the Arctic would only speed up the process of global warming. Nevertheless, no country can miss out on a chance to gain influence in the Arctic when all other states are already heavily involved.

The Arctic is an important location due to multiple factors. Its geo-economic importance and its environmental or geographical future are most valuable. Since the Arctic is environmentally fragile, any further intervention could endanger the region more, especially since the global warming is most likely to affect this area as well. With possible human interference extinction of wildlife in the area and the decrease of living land due to melting of ice are imaginable. Since big or rapid environmental changes in one area easily affect the whole globe, the consequences could be felt across the bigger region than just the Arctic. Countries involved in the conflict should pay attention especially to the geographical spectra of the issue, more so because of the unpredictable changes long-term. As such, this conflict has become a zero-sum game: if all states can agree that the Arctic will be fully demilitarized and left untouched by human activity (aside from scientific research), all will gain peace and security, yet lose billions in potential national revenue. If all agree to explore, mine and ship through the Arctic, a tight regime of rules will be necessary to prevent conflict – yet this option will be

detrimental to the environment and wildlife in the region. Lastly, if only some states will endeavor upon economic activity, those that do not will lose out severely. It will be your task to analyze this zero-sum game from all relevant perspectives, and to work out a solution in the Committee. Could it be possible to turn this zero-sum game into a positive-sum game for all actors involved, or is pending conflict practically inevitable? Politicization and militarisation of the Arctic therefore make for a real and tangible conflict that can only successfully be tackled on the international level, so as to get all Arctic states and stakeholders on board to agree. It is thus of the utmost importance that NATO Council will see a serious debate between all states involved, and that all national perspectives as well as global apprehensions be duly taken into account in this Council. A resolution to this conflict that will shape the way in which the Arctic is perceived politically, economically and environmentally is needed now more than ever.

It is crucial for member states to mitigate the damage, while focusing on the possible gains. There is more than one outcome for the Arctic, thus all scenarios should be investigated and thought through.

Timeline of the conflict

The Industrial Revolution: exploration and the quest for fuel

The success of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century depended on securing ample amounts of fuel, which sparked explorations in the Arctic. Technological advances in the early 20th century and the opening up of new international markets made finding new trade routes all the more important, which furthered the desire to explore the Arctic region and mine minerals and fuel. Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen crossed the Northwest Passage for the first time in 1903, while the American explorer Robert Peary was the first to reach the North Pole in 1909. Roald Amundsen also led the first Arctic exploratory mission by air in 1925.

The Second World War: strategic supply routes, battles, and submarines

In the Second World War, the Arctic became a key supply route for the Allied powers (whereof the then Soviet Union (SU) was a part): as the Arctic waters were geographically the shortest distance between the US and the SU, the former would send the latter strategic resources via this so-called Alaska-Siberian Route (ALSIB). This subsequently caused Nazi Germany to engage in attacks and invasions in the region, in part because the Soviet Union had by then constructed settlements in the Kara Sea and Barents Sea. The Battle of the Atlantic (1939-1945) partly took place in the Arctic where combating states fought with submarines and tried to track down one another's submarines by use of the invention of radar. The USSR had founded its Soviet Northern Fleet with its headquarters in Severomorsk (situated in the Kola Peninsula), which in part consisted of nuclear submarines and allowed for rapid reception of messages via the sea lines of communication (SLOC). Direct communication of the Northern Fleet also became possible with the Pacific Fleet in Vladivostok. Another conflict that took place among others in Arctic territory concerned the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union (November 1939). By the end of this war, Finland had lost its coastline with the Arctic. The strategic and military importance of the Arctic had been firmly established by this point.

The Cold War: arms race, strategy, espionage and military stand-off

After the Second World War, when the Cold War started, the proximity between the two super powers (USA and SU) via the Arctic region had shifted from being a strategic advantage to becoming a high-profile security risk for both actors. With the arms race between both

powers, militarization of the Arctic had been rendered inevitable. With the placement of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), nuclear-powered submarines, the ever-present threat of cruise missiles that could be dropped by military planes, both super powers initiated the construction of smart defense systems in the Arctic region and countries surrounding it. Examples of this are the Distance Early Warning System (DEW) - a joint initiative by Canada and the US, the stationing of anti-missile radars in Greenland (by the US), as well as radars and other missile detection devices in the Kola Peninsula and Latvia (both USSR initiatives). Along with the militarization of the Arctic circle and the greater Arctic region came the quest for nuclear deterrence, the prevention of mutually assured destruction (MAD), espionage and counterespionage perpetrated by both sides, and the constant patrolling by submarines of the Arctic. This stand-off kept culminating until Mikhail Gorbachev, then leader of the Soviet Union, signed the so-called Murmansk Initiative on the 1st of October 1987. This agreement sought to relax the tensed situation surrounding the Arctic and encourage co-operation in the fields of science and environmental issues.

1990s till present day

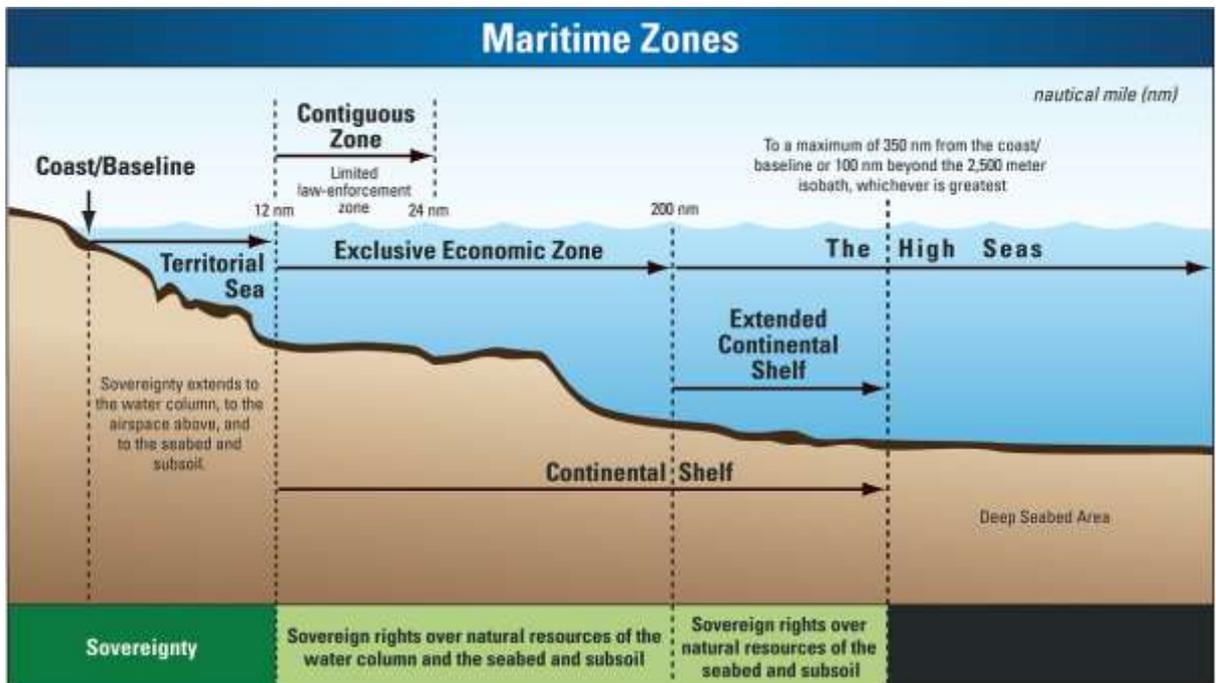
Many defense mechanisms and nuclear submarines had become outdated and were decommissioned as the Cold War had drawn to an end and the Soviet Union had disintegrated. The DEW defense line was disbanded, and the Arctic Council was founded in 1996. This Council promotes co-operation, co-ordination and interaction among the Arctic States and the communities living in the Arctic region and is comprised of the following Member States: Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States – also known as the Arctic Five. The Council focusses mostly on environmental protection and sustainable development. Now, we can view these developments in the Arctic from two key perspectives: on the one hand, we can note that it is certainly a good thing that the Cold War has drawn to a close without a major open conflict between both parties (not counting the many proxy wars in the world). In some respects, we could argue that the world has become a safer place now that the US and SU do not threaten mutual destruction. However, on the other hand, we could also argue that the world has, in fact, become a less safe place. This argument follows the line of thought that the two superpowers had created a kind of security paradigm wherein only they held major arms and engaged in military competition on a grand scale. After the Soviet Union had disintegrated, many smaller states came into existence, weapons were proliferated and new kinds of competition emerged. More countries are now seeking to explore the Arctic in terms of profitability, natural resources (oil and gas mostly), trade routes, and strategic importance. This development has been gaining momentum in recent years since, due to climate change, the Arctic ice has been melting at an ever-greater pace, creating the possibility for more in-depth exploration and large-scale international commercial navigation in the region.

Legal and geostrategic background on the conflict

In 1982 the United Nations adopted the Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which has served to define and settle the right to ownership of territorial waters, the right to mine natural resources as well as the right of naval passage, navigation and exploratory activities in and under a body of water, such as the Arctic Sea. The UNCLOS discerns the following sections and attributes differing rights to each naval section:

a. Territorial Sea

- b. Contiguous Zone
- c. Exclusive Economic Zone
- d. Continental Shelf
- e. High Seas



a) Territorial Sea

Territorial sea describes an area, where the coastal state has unlimited jurisdiction over all activities, extending 12 nautical miles from the baseline. It is important to note, that the coastal state is in full control over all economic activities, territorial navigation and occupation. However, foreign ships and ships sailing under a foreign flag have the right of free innocent passage.

b) Contiguous Zone

This zone is intermediary zone between the territorial sea and the high sea, extending another 12 nautical miles from the territorial sea, amounting to 24 nautical miles from the baseline.

The coastal state monitors any activities, which could result in armed conflict and can discourage any activity that could pose a threat to its national territory. Contiguous zone raises many questions, since the coastal state can block any aforementioned activity without reason, but at the same time it does not possess the full right over the territory of the zone.

c) Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

The EEZ extends up to 200 nautical miles from the baseline. In this zone the coastal state retains exclusive sovereignty over exploring, exploiting and conserving all natural resources.

Any infringement by third parties can be blocked by the coastal state, in order to ensure its economic assets including fishing, bio-prospecting and wind farming. Coastal state can inspect, board or arrest everyone that does not comply with the international laws and regulations.

d) Continental Shelf

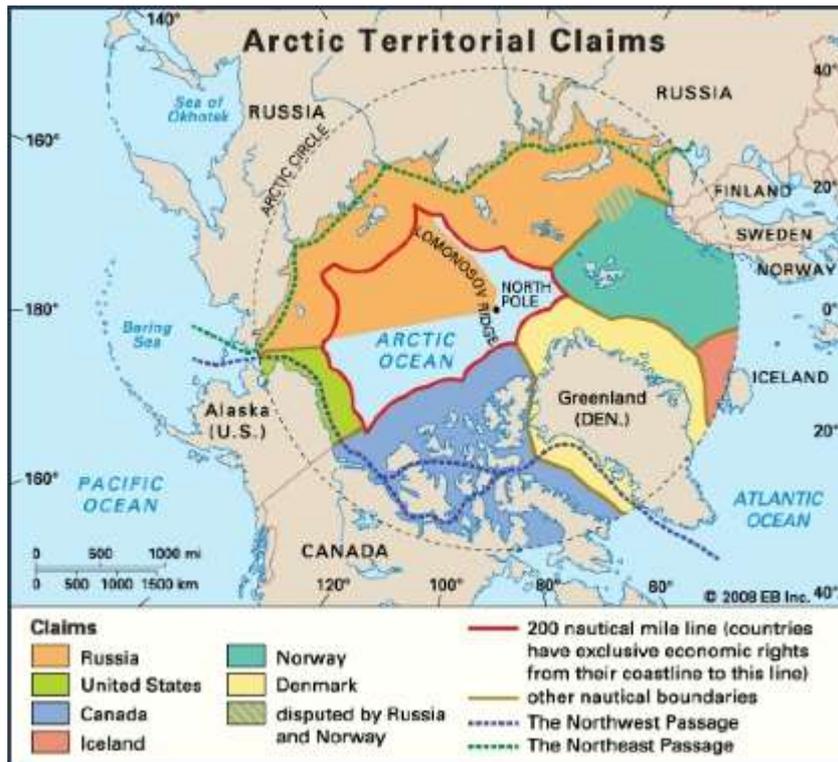
Continental shelf is a part of the seabed which is in the 'legal hands' of the coastline state, for exploration, exploitation of natural resources including oil and gas. The legal continental shelf extends out to a distance of 200 nautical miles from its coast, or further if the shelf naturally extends beyond that limit.

e) High Seas

The High Seas lie beyond 200 nautical miles from the baseline and are open and available for everyone. UNCLOS establishes peaceful interactions in the high seas as well as equal rights for all parties to the agreement. The Convention establishes freedom of activity in six spheres: Navigation, Overflight, Laying of cables and pipelines, Artificial islands and installations, Fishing, Marine scientific research.

Res nullius vs. res communis

The Arctic was, in the beginning, considered as a *res nullius* area, meaning that the region belonged to nobody and was available for occupation on a 'first come first serve basis'. The Arctic Circle was in the early 20th century divided into sectors. States that had land in the Arctic could claim ownership of a spherical triangular region north of its territory (the vertex being the North Pole, the meridian lines being the sides, and the base being either a parallel or a natural geographical line). International law, therefore, moved from the *res nullius* towards the *res communis* norm. The latter meaning that an area cannot be occupied by any particular state or states and is designated to be common international territory. UNCLOS treaty applies on the territory of the Arctic, where (legally) there cannot be any confrontation or armed conflict between the states. There is no other legal document that would rule the Arctic. However, the international community has the Arctic Council, which unfortunately, has no mandate in regards to military security. Therefore, the UNCLOS treaties apply to the Arctic Circle and govern it and its borders. The legal issue, however, lies at interpretational space, which is set in UNCLOS. As aforementioned, the definition of the continental shelf became an issue due to the Lomonosov ridge, an 1800 km long stretch of land that is likely to be highly mineral-rich (oil and gas). Russia claims the ridge and argues that the continental crust of the Lomonosov ridge corresponds to that of Russia's continental shelf. On the other hand, Canada and Denmark disagree and argue that the ridge is the property of Greenland. The UN has, as of now, not been able to settle this territorial dispute. Russia has proposed to redefine the sea limits based on a different interpretation of the UNCLOS treaties. This too has made for a territorial dispute, and with the climate changing and the more resources becoming extractable, the Arctic diplomatic conundrum is rapidly gaining more prominence on the international political agenda.



Major stakeholders

a. Russia

A Russian diving mission planted a Russian flag on the Lomonosov ridge in 2007. This effectively started international concerns regarding the Russian desire to occupy and gain power in greater parts of the Arctic Circle. In that same year, Russia commenced with patrolling the Arctic. Russian scientists even put forth the idea of renaming the Arctic Ocean ‘the Russian Ocean’. In the meantime, Russia has steadily been building up a military presence in the region by restoring and reopening Soviet-era military bases and airports, establishing Arctic brigade combat teams and an Arctic Joint Strategic Command.

(Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis, 16 June 2016).

It already has two military bases in the region and has four additional ones under construction, including new airfields and ports. Putin has made clear in 2008 (and reaffirmed this in 2013) that the Arctic region is one of Russia’s main strategic priorities (for more information see the 2020 Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation). Russia has the largest fleet of icebreakers in the world (at least 40) and is investing in at least a dozen more, some of which are nuclear-powered, aside from its investments in double-acting tankers and cargo vessels. Still, Russia

contends that its Arctic strategy is not based on short-term aggression, but rather focuses on long-term defense. Aside from military equipment and infrastructure, Russia also holds large-scale military exercises in the Arctic, such as the Zapad exercise in 2017 and the Vostok exercise in 2018.

b. United States

The USA seems to be the only Arctic country that has not made the Arctic a policy priority. It has not signed or ratified the UNCLOS treaties. That being said, the US has sent two nuclear submarines to participate in the 2011 Ice Exercise (ICEX), and has started patrolling the Arctic both in the air as well as under the polar ice. The country has founded an Arctic basecamp 150 nautical miles (278 km) north of Prudhoe Bay in Alaska, and has also made funds available for icebreakers (it has at least 1 that has the ability to operate year-round). During operation Trident Juncture 18 the United States dispatched one of its largest Navy flagships: the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman, along with a Navy aircraft carrier strike group.

c. Canada

Canada has initiated a ‘use it or lose it’ policy, wherein it has rekindled its interest in the Arctic. It owns the famous Canadian Northern Territories, which is a vast landmass that directly faces the Arctic Ocean; a highly strategic region to have. Canada has constructed an Arctic Training Centre for the Canadian Armed Forces in Resolute Bay – located well into the Arctic Circle. The construction and completion of a deep-water docking port has been delayed several times over the years, but may be operational soon. Canada shares the so-called Arctic Bridge or Arctic Sea Bridge with Russia, which leads from the Canadian Hudson Bay to the Russian port of Murmansk – in part following the Northwest Passage. Canada has historically been vehemently opposed against any and all kinds of Arctic militarization and has stopped any initiative proposing this in recent years. The most important reason for this is that Canada fears that if NATO were to play a prominent role in the Arctic, this might pave the way for non-Arctic NATO countries to gain influence in the Arctic region which they would be unable to obtain if NATO does not create a joint presence.

d. Norway

Norway is a NATO Member State that has military connections with Russia. The countries engage in joint naval exercises on a yearly basis since 2010 after having settled a 40-year territorial dispute in the Arctic over the border of the Barents Sea. Norway and Russia agreed to work towards reaching common goals from then onwards. That being said, this does not

mean that diplomatic and political relations between Norway and Russia are free from worries: Norway namely sees itself on the frontlines of any Arctic conflict with Russia. The country has been inviting foreign NATO troops to exercise on its territory, such as a regiment of 800 British troops on a regular basis, as well as over 700 US Marines for on-going cold-weather training. Norway subsequently moved its military headquarters of the Norwegian Armed Forces to Bodø, which is situated just inside the Arctic Circle. In this, Norway is unique, as this it’s the only permanent military headquarters in the Arctic region. It is no secret that Norway has been heavily investing in Arctic defense and takes a strongly proactive stance in wishing to militarize the Arctic. Norway has also hosted the international Trident Juncture exercise in November 2018, wherein all 29 NATO countries participated.

e. Denmark

Denmark has founded a key military compound, the unified Arctic Command, as well as an Arctic Response Force, aside from spending an additional 102 million euros in military equipment and upgrades.

f. Other actors

*** China**

As briefly mentioned, China is showing interest in the Arctic and has economic (and allegedly also political) aspirations. It too has been constructing icebreakers and is partnering up with Russia for the so-called 'polar Silk Road'.

*** Sweden**

Sweden has in recent years started to ever more seriously consider gaining full membership of NATO. For the first time in twenty years, it hosted its own military exercise, Aurora 17. It announced an increase in military forces from 50,000 to 120,000 and has even introduced general conscription to help reach those numbers. Sweden plans to buy 60 state-of-the-art Saab Gripen fighter jets and more submarines. It will significantly increase its military spending from its current level, a bit over 1% of GDP. Recent polls show nearly half of all Swedes favor full NATO membership, a proportion that would have been unthinkable a decade earlier. Former prime minister Carl Bildt, writing about the NATO exercise, said "with no time to waste, Scandinavia is finally breaking fully with the Cold War era doctrine of neutrality, and embracing a more prudent and proactive defense policy." (Mary Thompson-Jones, 6 November 2018).

*** Finland**

Finland does not have a coastline in the Arctic Ocean, however much of its territory lies north of the Polar Circle. It is also basing its interest to the fact that nearly 1/3 of people living north of the 60th parallel are Finns. Finland has conducted an Arctic Strategy, adopted in 2013, where they emphasize the importance of sustainable development and cooperation between nations. The strategy has been revised twice since its passing, maintaining the wish of pioneering sustainable tourism and infrastructure solutions.

*** Iceland**

Iceland has reopened Keflavik air base (which had been closed down in 2006) to host the US Poseidon P-8A maritime patrol aircraft. The United States itself is spending 30 million euros in order to upgrade the Keflavik base.

NATO's role in the Arctic conflict

In the past couple of years, the international order became more challenging and under constant changes. The security environment is characterized by a wide variety of risks and issues. Thus, NATO has to deal with complex combination of local armed conflicts, state-level confrontations, proliferation of nuclear weapons and missiles and cyber threats. All of these unconventional and asymmetric issues have challenged the traditional perception of the Alliance's role and mission. NATO has, at the Lisbon Summit in 2010, adopted a strategic concept for the decade titled Active Engagement, Modern Defense. The document specifies the most pressing issues of the present: proliferation of nuclear weapons, terrorism, cyber-attacks and environmental challenges. Their way of tackling these problems is by reinforcing arms

control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, emphasizing NATO's open-door policy for all European countries and significantly enhancing its partnership in the broad sense of the term. As the reach and range of the NATO missions greatly expanded with new goals that transcend the traditional Art. 5 missions, it became evident that the parameters that determine the effectiveness of NATO command structure had to be redefined. NATO has, including its operational structure, developed new departments at the Summit in 2010. They have included a department for emerging security challenges, that has to overlook the escalations of hybrid warfare. Some allies believe that a response to new conflicts should be collective and multinational, while others argue that the nation is primarily responsible for the protection of critical information and energy infrastructure. The Arctic is especially vital in this regard. NATO has not addressed the Arctic in the current strategic concept, however NATO Parliamentary Assembly has issued a report on the region in October 2017. The report has concluded that the Alliance should, at least, be present and aware of the escalation or the involvement of the situation in the region, saying that NATO should have the capacity and the resources to overview the situation. This is due to the difference of opinions of the member states, as mentioned before, on the role of the Alliance.

NATO has deployed several research missions to the Arctic, but has not committed itself to fully participate in the resolution of the conflict.

Conclusion

The NATO Member States hold quite differing positions towards the Arctic situation. On the one side there is Canada, which argues against any kind of militarization in the region whatsoever, while on the other side we find Norway, which strongly feels that much more NATO presence in the form of militarization, patrols and surveillance are necessary in the Arctic. All other NATO allies' perspectives on the matter can be found between these two rather extreme positions. The US, as said, has only quite recently started to perceive the Arctic as more than merely a source where to mine energy products. The NATO countries may have strength in numbers (of allies), but their divided stances on key issues regarding the issue of Arctic militarization certainly proves to be a liability renders them and the organization as seeming feeble in the eyes of international competitors such as Russia. The 2010 Strategic Concept does not even make mention of the Arctic whatsoever, nor does the NATO North Atlantic Joint Force Command hold a perspective on this region. To consider amending and updating this Strategic Concept as well as the 2011 NATO Maritime Strategy in light of recent developments would allow for more clarity on NATO's position in the Arctic. Any and all policies and strategies ought to take the risk of miscalculation into account: misunderstandings, miscommunications and misconstrued or misinterpreted information may become a catalyst for conflict or spark escalation. We already see this happening as Western powers deem Russia to act on an 'imagined threat': *"The former Supreme Allied Commander of Europe, General Philip Breedlove, described Russian activity in the Arctic as "increasingly troubling," stating: "Their increase in stationing military forces, building and reopening bases, and creating an Arctic military district—all to counter an imagined threat to their internationally undisputed territories—stands in stark contrast to the conduct of the seven other Arctic nations.""* (Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis, 16 June 2016). In politics and conflicts the facts matter less than the perception of those facts; after all, people act upon their perceptions.

With the progression of time and technology, and as Russian military presence and international interest in the Arctic grow, it is high time for NATO to establish at least a common

position on the Arctic question, and preferably also a clear, joint policy facing regional security challenges. This would not only reaffirm the alliance for the Members itself, but also send out a signal of strength and unity to non-NATO countries operating (or interested in doing so) in the Arctic. NATO has de facto always been led by the United States. Yet with the US only showing meagre interest in the Arctic, combined by Trump's unbalance and fickle presidency, it is unsure whether the US will prove willing and able to take on the role of leadership of NATO in the Arctic. *"The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) must pursue a more active role in the affairs of the Arctic region in order to ensure the sovereignty of NATO nations, preserve Arctic security, and promote multilateral cooperation through peaceful means"* (Cathyrine T. R. Deja, May 2016). Most importantly, the discussion and debate in this NATO Summit should not become side-tracked along the lines of the height of national contributions and openly questioned transatlantic solidarity, as this would likely stand in the way of reaching a united stance. It might be interesting to explore whether, and if so to what extent, NATO's famous 3-Ds approach 'defence, deterrence, dialogue' might be applied in the Arctic – or amended in such a way to be rendered appropriate and applicable to the question of regional security.

As Russia continues to militarize the Arctic, NATO Members' views of these acts of aggression and assertiveness may well influence their stance with regards to the direction of a possible joint Arctic stance or policy. Nevertheless, this does not mean that NATO should strike back with an overly assertive reaction. Ideas to think about implementing would perhaps be to officially and formally recognize NATO's role in the Arctic, which could allow for joint training missions and exercises in the Arctic Circle. This might also allow for taking the so-called 'GIUK gap' into consideration: the strategic triangle between Greenland, Iceland and the United Kingdom, which geographically connects North Atlantic to the Arctic Circle. This could even lead to the creation of a special NATO Arctic Taskforce that not only includes the mentioned countries as stakeholders, but also multilateral organizations such as the Arctic Council and the European Union as observers, or in a more active role having a say in NATO's Arctic policy.

On the one hand, NATO should do its best to keep tensions in the Arctic low, as well as the chances of the situation escalating into a conflict. On the other hand, NATO should work towards the ability to rapidly deploy forces, achieve greater military mobility, develop a stronger sense of situational awareness, and be able to dispatch joint air policing missions, air and sea patrols and reconnaissance, anti-submarine warfare activities, air defense capabilities and coastal defense systems. All this is to be achieved without making Russia feel backed into a corner to the extent that escalation of the conflict will erupt. The NATO countries will therefore have to tread carefully and balance on a diplomatic chord. NATO's signals given off to the international community should thus be resolute, clear and portray unity – without coming across as aggressive, overly assertive, or too strong. This may namely be perceived by Russia as an overt threat that is to be acted upon with force and/or increased militarization of the Arctic – which, in turn, would complicate the regional security situation even further.

Questions to be addressed (QTBA)

1. To what extent and if at all, is NATO willing to mitigate the conflict in the Arctic? What is the strategic plan and the level of presence?
2. How will NATO answer to the threat of Russia's hybrid attacks on the NATO member states in the region?

3. Will NATO answer, if countries decide to militarize the Arctic?
4. What to member states involved in the conflict expect from NATO Committee?
5. Since there is little legal background regarding the Arctic Circle, is NATO going to be involved in the establishment of a possible new legal order?

Further reading

We advise you to further deepen your knowledge on the Arctic by reading the literature below. Let us remind you that Study Guide itself is not the only document for the preparation for the conference.

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