

Geopolitics in the Arctic - strategies, policies and challenges

Dr. Lassi Heininen
University of Lapland, Finland

IFRI
Brussels, Sept. 13, 2011



The early-21st century Arctic

The Arctic / circumpolar North as a new region!

Main themes, or trends of the post-Cold War circumpolar geopolitics and IR:

- 1) Increasing circumpolar coop by indigenous peoples' organizations and sub-national governments
- 2) Region-building with unified states as major actors
- 3) New kind of relationship between the circumpolar North and the outside world

(Arctic Human Development Report, 2004)





ANOTHER PRISTINE
MINERAL-RICH
ENVIRONMENT
HAS BEEN
DISCOVERED

OH DEAR...
THIS COULD BE JUST
THE TIP OF
THE
ICEBERG!!

ICEBERG?
WHAT'S AN
ICEBERG?

NOT
SO
FAST

MINE

HOLD
ON!

MY
LAND

I
OWN
THIS!

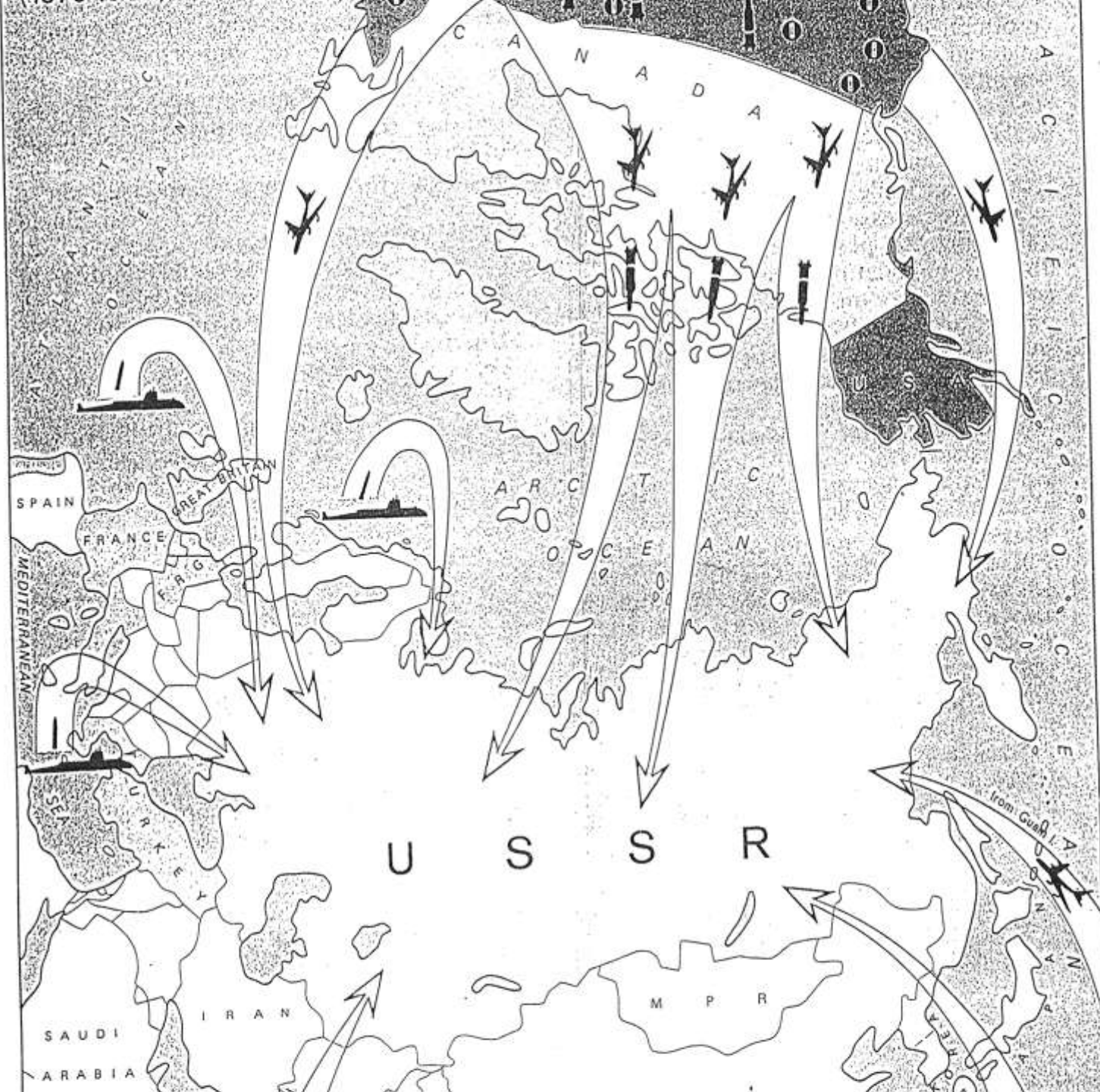
Main discourses in the 2010s

Stability and peacefulness based on institutionalized international cooperation

vs.

A 'race' of natural resources and emerging conflicts, even new 'cold war', based on the emphasis of state sovereignty



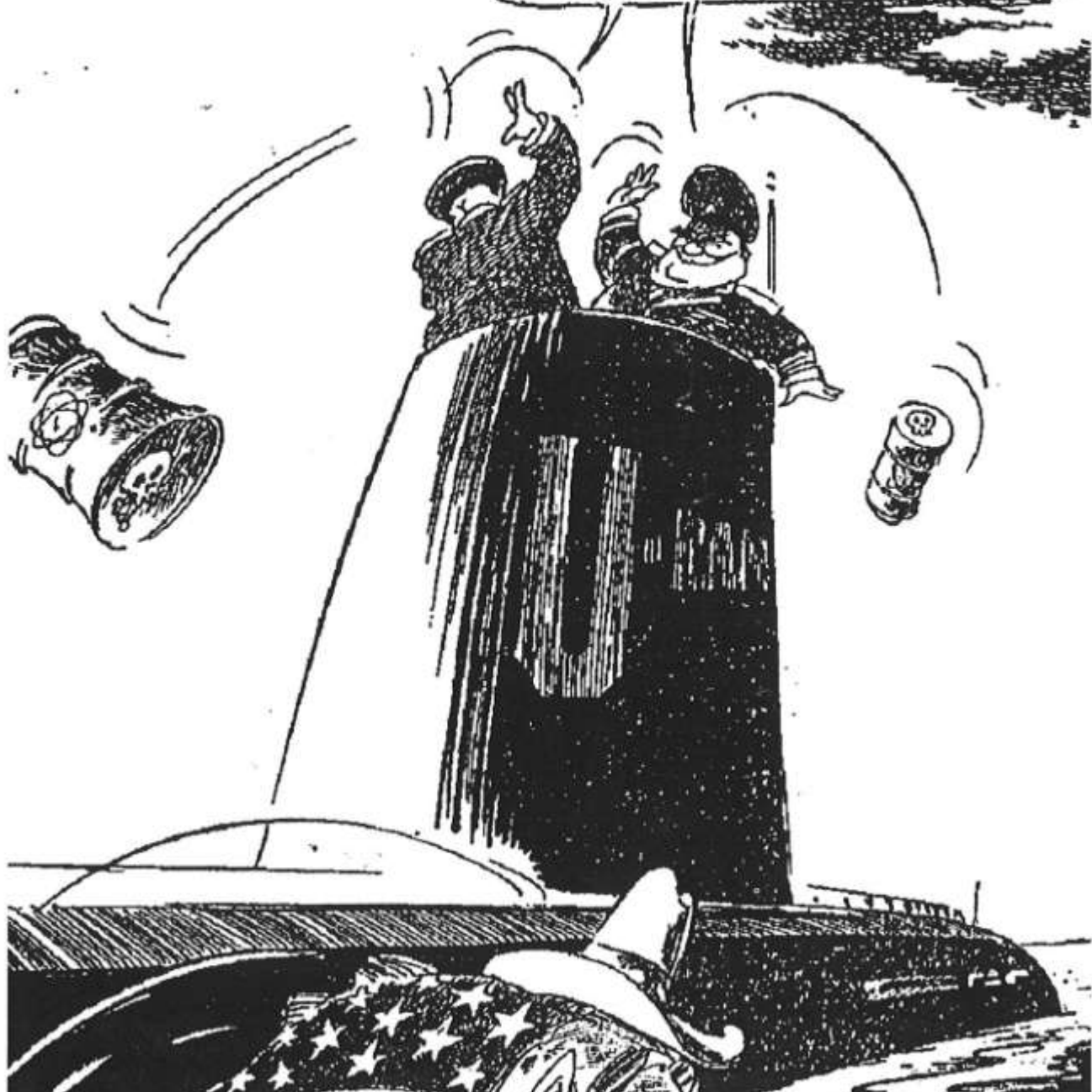


Nuclear safety

- Radioactivity as a local and regional pollutant, and an example of environmental 'awakening' in the North
- Risk and threat (military and civilian) e.g. dumped nuclear wastes, nuclear icebreakers, Kursk accident
- Became a special issue for, and in, international Arctic cooperation between the Arctic states
- E.g. AEPS, BEAC, AMEC, MNEP
- Caused a change in problem definition on security discourse and premise in the Arctic
- Problem is in control, but how real is the change?



NA SDOROVJE!



Learned lessons from the first significant geopolitical change

“From confrontation to cooperation!”

- The ultimate aim of state politics: to decrease military tension and increase political stability
- From state hegemony and power politics into sophisticated policy (cooperation on environ protection)
- The used means: trans-boundary cooperation and region-building
- The result: decreased military and political tension, and increased stability and peace = a success story



The early-21st century Arctic

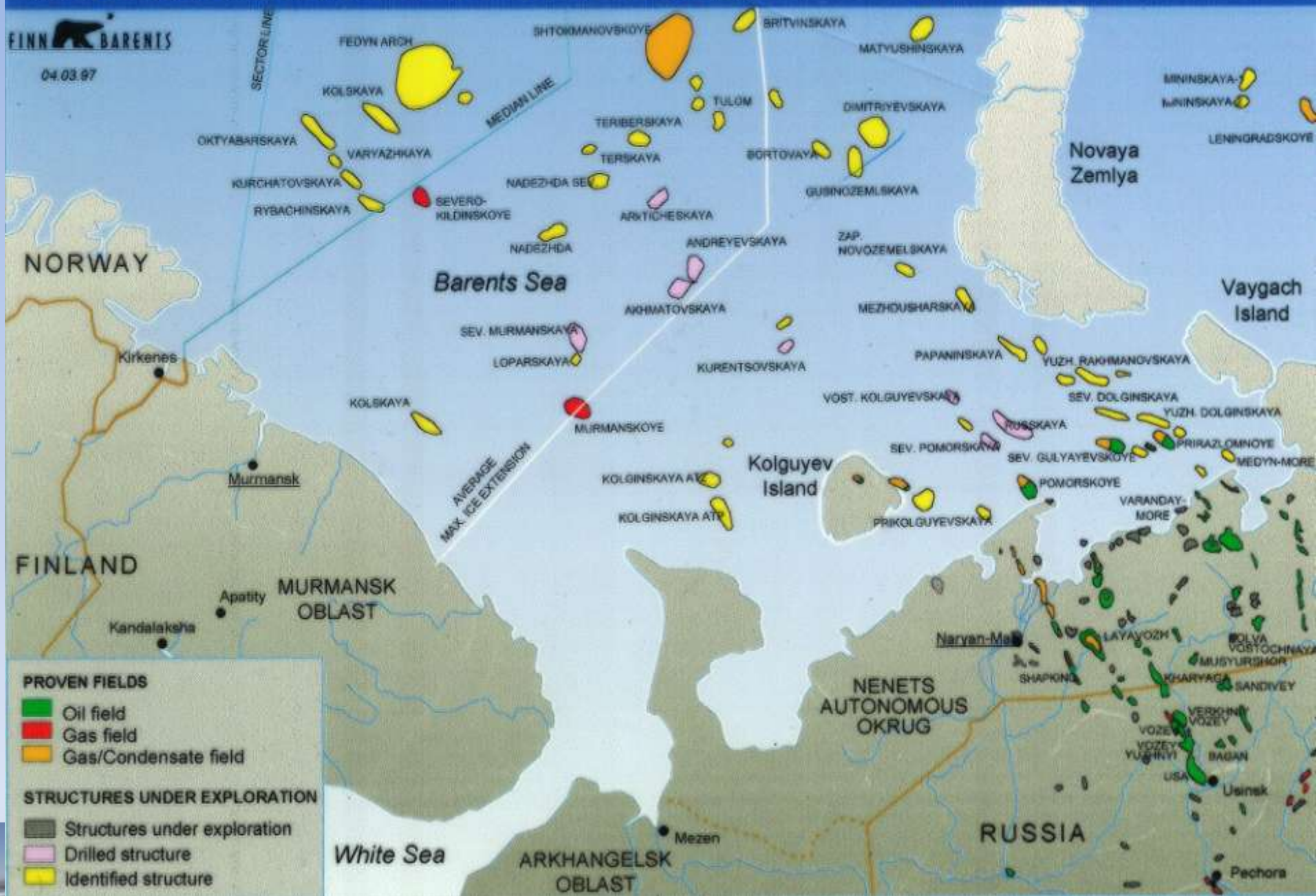
- A peaceful region with high stability based on a wide intergovernmental and regional cooperation
- No conflicts, but disputes on maritime borders and asymmetric environmental conflicts
- Major challenges e.g. climate change and long-range air and water pollution, and globalization
- Legally and politically divided by national borders and internal waters (of the Arctic states)
- Major military structures (nuclear weapon systems) and capability for national defence are still there
- Importance of state sovereignty and national interests



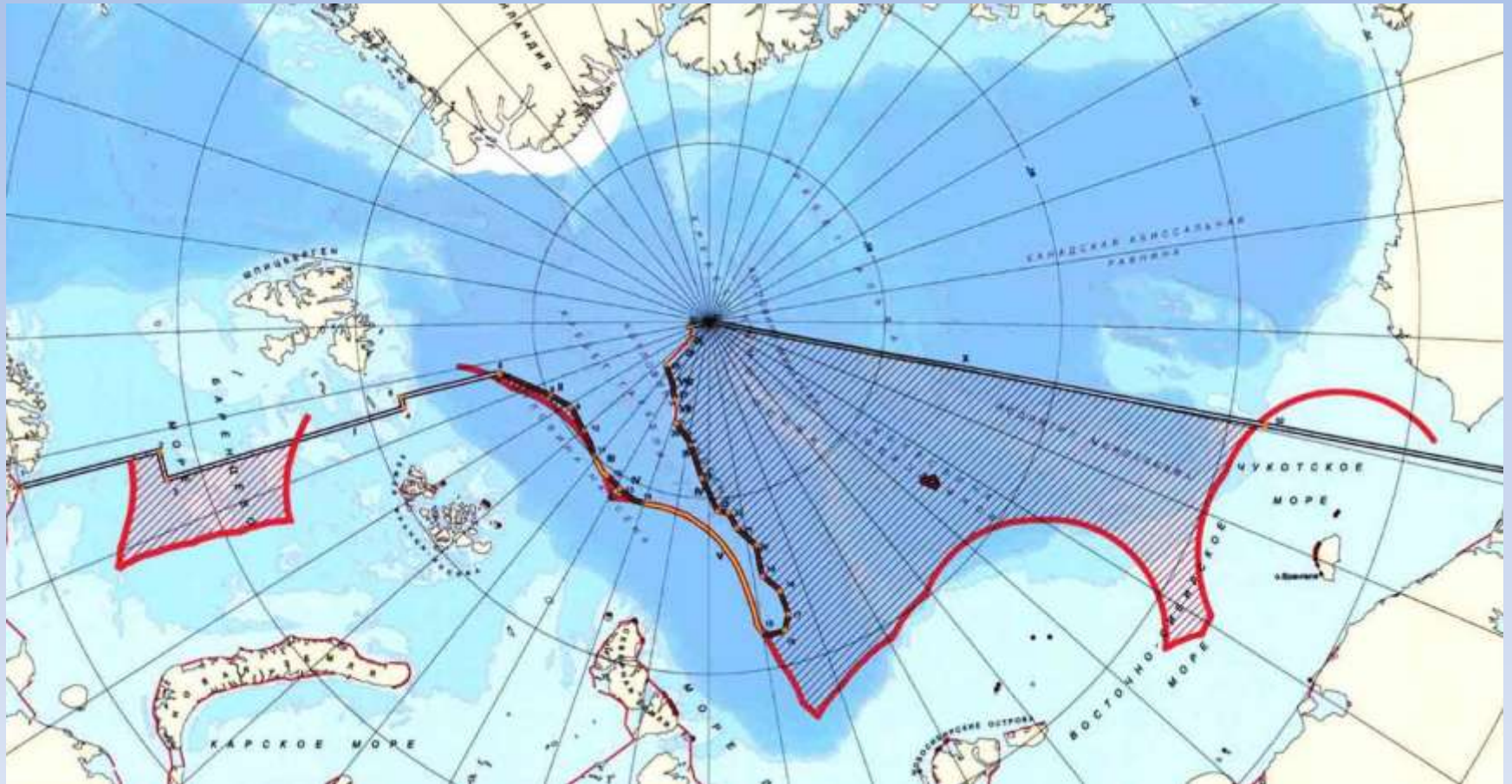
MAIN OIL AND GAS DEPOSITS IN NORTH-WEST RUSSIA



04.03.97



The Russian continental shelf claim



The early-21st century Arctic continues..

- Indeed, a growing interest toward the region and its rich natural resources, from outside the Arctic
- Emphasis of energy security, and options for that
- There are new actors (from outside the region) with their interests present in the region (e.g. China)
- Or, to influence the region (e.g. the impacts by EU)
- Also globalization and the globalized world economy
- Consequently, there is a manifold growth in the geo-strategic importance of the Arctic region



The EU impacts on the Arctic

- Climate change: EU has recognized the Arctic region as a key area to influence the Northern Hemisphere climate, and the EU plays a central role in international climate change negotiations in the UNFCCC
- Fishery and fish trade: the EU member-states only hold a minor share of all the catches in the Arctic, the EU is the major export destination from the Arctic states (e.g. 80% of all Icelandic and 60% of Norwegian fish exports)
- Research: the EU policies and a European research agenda e.g. on the environment, and the climate system and climate change



The Arctic States

- The role and position of the Arctic states was changed due to the first geopolitical change – the A8+ was defined
- The states emphasize the importance of the AC but have their own interests, agendas, priorities and policies
- An example of this is the recent arctic strategies / policies
- The five littoral states with their ministerial ad hoc meetings – the A5 was defined - and the Arctic redefined?
- A state still the most important actor in the Arctic, but ..
- .. now there are new actors (from outside the region) with their interests => new challenges, or threats

See: Arctic Strategies and Policies – Inventory and Comparative Study by Lassi Heininen (Northern Research Forum 2011)





Canada

- The Northern Strategy 'Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future' (July 2009) (first of all) for domestic policy and audience
- Followed by 'Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy' (August 2010) to promote the Strategy and serve "Government's Arctic foreign policy"
- Priority areas of the Strategy are:
 - Exercising Canada's Arctic sovereignty
 - Promoting social & economic development
 - Protecting the North's environmental heritage
 - Improving and devolving Northern governance



The Kingdom of Denmark

- Join draft strategy of Denmark and Greenland (May 2008) with the twofold goal
 - to support and strengthen Greenland's development towards increased autonomy
 - to maintain the Kingdom's position as a major player in the Arctic
- The Kingdom of Denmark's Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020 (August 2011) with strategic priority is to maintain a peaceful, secure and safe Arctic
 - with self-sustaining growth and development
 - with respect for the Arctic's fragile climate, environment and nature
 - in close cooperation with international partners

Finland

- ‘Strategy for the Arctic Region’, adopted by Finish Cabinet Committee on European Union (June 2010)
- The main substantial sectors of the Strategy:
 - The environment
 - Economic activities and know-how
 - Transportation and infrastructure
 - Indigenous peoples
- Plus, a list of means for to reach these Arctic policy goals, and a chapter on the EU and the Arctic region



Iceland

- ‘Iceland in the High North’ by the Icelandic MFA (September 2009) with six highlights:
 - International cooperation
 - Security through international cooperation
 - Resource development and environ protection
 - Transportation
 - People and cultures
 - International coop on research and monitoring
- ‘Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland’s Arctic Policy’ approved by the Parliament (March 2011) with twelve principles



Norway

- 'The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy' (December 2006) and its follow-up strategy 'New Building Blocks in the North' (March 2009)
- Seven revised strategic priorities of Norway's Strategy:
 - to develop knowledge about climate change and the environ
 - to improve monitoring, emergency response and maritime safety in northern waters
 - to promote sustainable use of off-shore petroleum and renewable marine resources
 - to promote off-shore business development in the North
 - to further-develop the infrastructure in the North
 - to continue to exercise sovereignty firmly and strengthen cross-border cooperation (with Russia) in the North
 - to safeguard the cultures and livelihoods of ind. peoples

The Russian Federation

- ‘The Fundamentals of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic in the Period up to 2020 and Beyond’ adopted by President D. Medvedev (September 2008)
- The strategy priorities are:
 - active interaction of Russia with sub-Arctic states in regards to delimitation of maritime areas on the basis of international law and mutual arrangements
 - creating a uniform Arctic search and rescue regime
 - strengthening of bilateral relationships within regional organizations (AC and BEAC)
 - assistance in management and effective use of cross-polar air routes and the NSR for international navigation
 - contributions to international Arctic forums through the Russia-EU partnerships
 - delimitation of maritime spaces in the Arctic Ocean and maintenance of a mutually advantageous presence of Russia in the Spitsbergen archipelago
 - improvement of state management of the social and economic development
 - improvement of the quality of life for indigenous peoples
 - development of the Arctic resource base through improved technology
 - modernization and development of Russia’s Arctic infrastructure

Sweden

- ‘Sweden’s Strategy for policy in the Arctic Region’ (Sveriges strategi för den arktiska regionen), adopted by the Swedish Government (May 2011)
- The three areas, which are defined as the priorities:
 - Climate and the environment
 - Economic development
 - The human dimension



The United States

- The US 'Arctic Region Policy' by the President Bush's Administration (January 2009)
- Interpreted objectives of the United States' Arctic Policy:
 - National security and homeland security interests in the Arctic
 - International governance, largely through the AC
 - Boundary issues including extended continental shelf
 - Promotion of international scientific cooperation
 - Maritime transportation (incl. maritime safety and environmental protection)
 - Economic development, particularly energy
 - Environmental protection and conservation



The European Union

- The European Union's 'Commission's Communication on the Arctic Region' was launched in November 2008
- It was followed by the European Council's Conclusions on Arctic issues (March and December 2009)
- The main policy objectives of the Communication are:
 - Protecting and preserving the Arctic environment and its population
 - Promoting sustainable use of resources
 - Contributing to enhanced Arctic multilateral governance



Arctic states: summary of the priorities

- Sovereignty and national defence: Five littoral states
- Comprehensive security: Finland, Iceland, Sweden
- Economic development: All the strategies
- Regional development and infra: Most of the strategies
- Transportation: Finland, Iceland, Russia, USA
 - Aviation: Iceland and Russia
- Environment: Almost all the strategies
- Governance: All the strategies
 - Safety/Rescue: Kingdom of Den, Iceland, Norway, Russia
- Peoples/Indigenous peoples: Most of the strategies
- Science/Scientific coop: Iceland, Norway, Russia, USA



Arctic states: main priorities / objectives

	<u>Sov/S</u>	<u>Econ+D</u>	<u>Trans</u>	<u>Envir</u>	<u>Gov+R</u>	<u>Peo/Ind</u>	<u>Scien</u>
Can	x/x	x+x		x	x		
KofDen	x/	x+x		x	x+x		
Fin	/x	x+x	x	x		/x	
Ice	/x	x+x	x	x	x+x	x	x
Nor	x/x	x+x		x	x+x	/x	x
Rus	x/	x+x	x		x+x	/x	x
Swe		x		x		x/x	
USA	x/	x	x	x	x		x
(EU)		x		x	x	x	

(Heininen, Arctic Strategies and Policies: Inventory and Comparative Study, 2011)



Self-identification and (re)definition as an Arctic / Northern country / state

- **Canada:** “the global leader in Arctic science; “The North is central to the Canadian national identity”
- **Kingdom of Denmark:** “to strengthen the Kingdom’s status as global player in the Arctic”
- **Finland:** as an “Arctic country is a natural actor in the Arctic region”
- **Iceland:** “the only country located entirely within the Arctic region”
- **Norway:** “the High North is gradually becoming more synonymous with the Arctic” ... “a Norwegian perspective”
- **Russia:** to “maintain the role of a leading Arctic power”
- **Sweden:** “there are many connections to tie Sweden to the Arctic”
- **USA:** an “Arctic nation”

Reflection/response to the change(s)

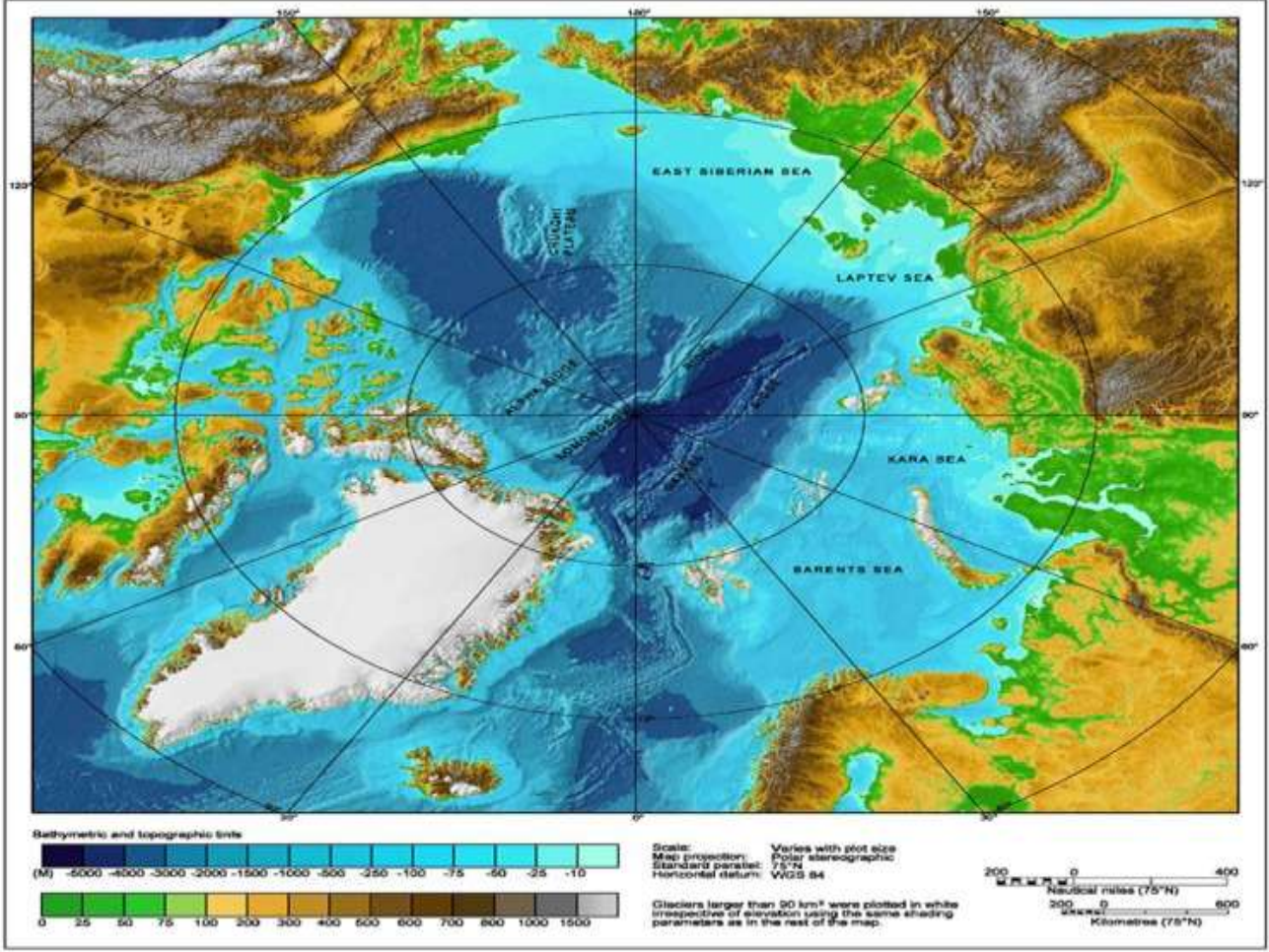
- Canada: yes
 - Kingdom of Denmark: yes and no (self-governing)
 - Finland: yes
 - Iceland: yes
 - Norway: not really (Russia)
 - Russia: no (pragmatic means for domestic policy)
 - Sweden: yes
 - USA: yes
- Global perspective: Kingdom of Denmark and Finland



The early-21st century Arctic continues..

- Another significant multifunctional - environmental, geoeconomic and geopolitical - change has occurred
- Among indicators of the change: climate change, energy security, sovereignty (Ilulissat meeting), globalization
- Also growing global interest toward the region and its natural resources by Asian and European powers
- This is supported by world-wide approach by Indigenous peoples and their knowledge(s)
- All this is taken as a reality, and threat or challenge, and means that the post-Cold War period is over!

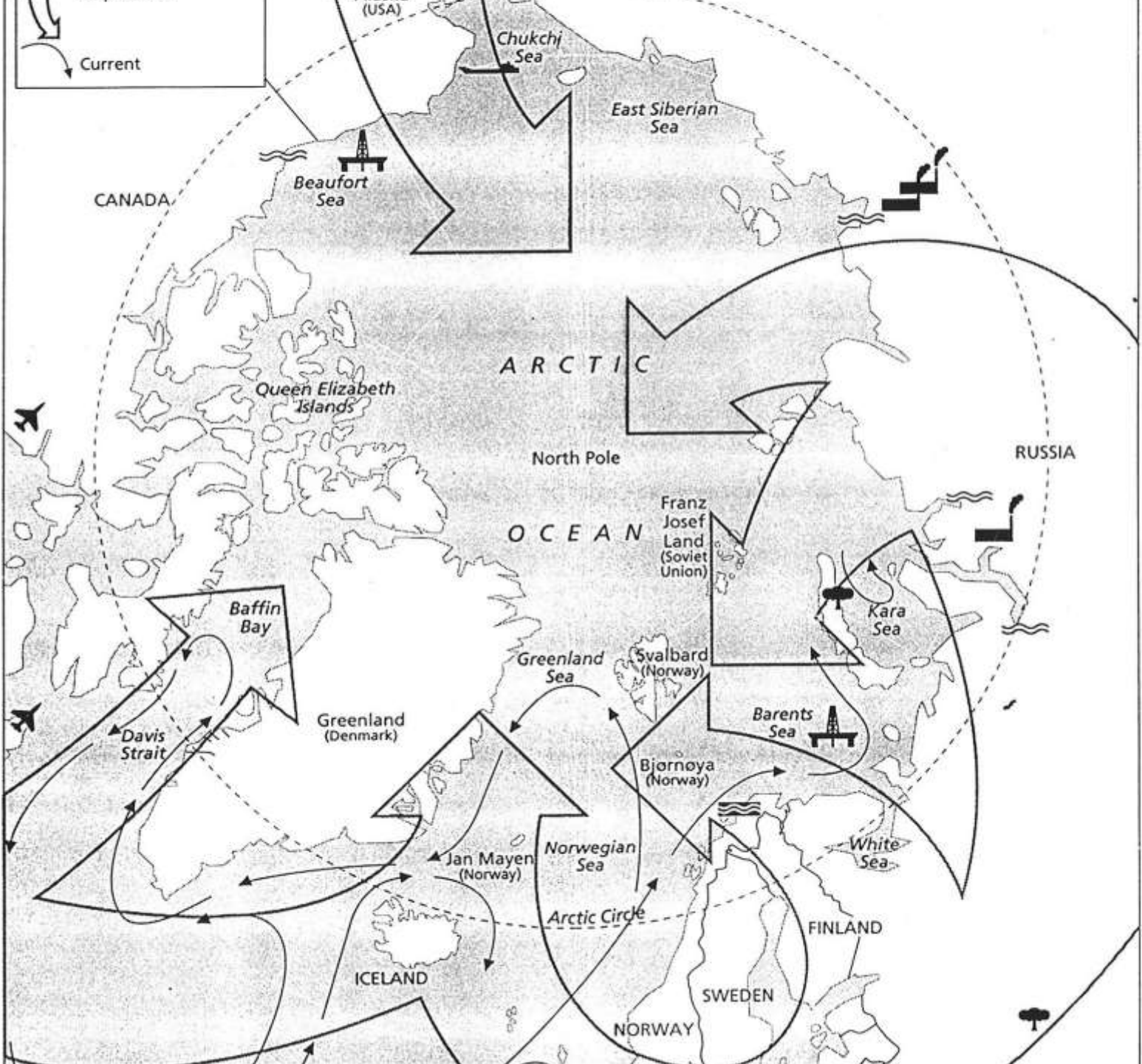




Climate change

- Climate change as a global environmental problem (with its physical impacts and the associated ‘uncertainty’)
- Thus, it has a relevant security dimension – either a danger, risk or uncertain thing, threat or challenge
- Climate change has already caused a change in Northern geopolitics and problem definition on security discourse(s), and has potential to cause that on security premise(s)
- What about security paradigm, or, is climate change a new discipline for ‘disciplining’?
- To remind that ‘nuclear safety’ already caused a change in security discourse(s) and premise(s) at the late of 1990s!





A spectrum of changing positions

Unmapped area and 'unknown' world => Periphery
or marginal area => Frontier => Resource area for
states => Strategic security zone for superpowers =>
Environmental 'awakening' / linchpin =>
'Cooperation instead of confrontation' => Stable,
peaceful, innovative and cooperative ('distinctive')
region => Climate change, globalisation and its flows
=> Another, more multifunctional change in, and
beyond, the 2010s => Globalization?



Globalization in the Arctic

- Globalization bringing problems to the North!?
- Negative: impacts of climate change, privatization, modernity ('Cola-Colanization'), new isms, weakening of nation-states' ability to protect its northern communities (sovereignty) from new threat
- Positive: decolonization and growth of regional autonomy, recognition of indigenous peoples' rights, emphasis on the rule of law and multilateral environ initiatives, new ICT, 'diversity' as a global value

(Globalization and the Circumpolar North, 2010)



Globalization in the Arctic continues..

- Global relations are nothing new (whaling, sealing, fur trade)
- Colonialism, (pre)industrialization, exploration, nuclear weapon system and militarization
- Long-range (air and water) pollution and other global environmental problems (and flows)
- Also environmental 'awakening', growing consciousness of own identity, world-wide approach by indigenous peoples, democratization, self-government and regionalization
- Growing global interest toward the region and its resources by Asian and European powers from outside the region...
- .. and the Arctic in world politics

(Globalization and the Circumpolar North, 2010)





The Arctic in world politics

Region's position greatly strengthened in the last 20 years:

- Geopolitical point of view: as a highly strategic area
- Economical point of view: as highly strategic due to utilization of natural resources (esp. energy sources)
- Diversity of life: as a distinct component of a nature, and diversity of indigenous peoples/cultures
- Scientific point of view: as a 'laboratory'/'workshop' for research on the environ and climate change
- Viewpoint of human capital: innovations in governance, and political/legal arrangements (e.g. devolution of power)
- Stability and peace: as not overtly plagued by anyone big regional or global problem (e.g. war)

