The Arctic: Strategic Priorities of Circumpolar Countries

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Abstract. The article is concerned with topical issues of the Arctic governance. The main motives of the growing interest of the world community to this region are revealed. A comparative analysis of the conceptual framework and key priorities of the Arctic policy of the Russian Federation and other circumpolar powers based on the study of their national Arctic strategies was treated. The main difference of the Russian model of the Arctic management is the priority of the exploitation of natural resources, while the policy of foreign countries is aimed primarily at the sustainable development of the Arctic territories. In our opinion, practical implementation of the model when the state vector of the Arctic policy is focused primarily on the social component as the basis for the integrated balanced development of the Arctic zone and ensuring the national security of this country is more advisable for Russia. That is, the implementation of the sustainable development model of the Arctic territories, the main elements of such are rational and careful environmental management in the Arctic; limiting the negative impact on the environment and preserving biodiversity; focusing national policies not only on the indigenous, but also on the local population; improving their quality and living standards; close international cooperation at the municipal, regional and world levels. This study was supported by the Russian Science Foundation, project № 19-18-00025.

1. Introduction
The Arctic, being for a long time outside the domain of interests of the majority of world powers, has lately increasingly become a priority object of global sociopolitical discourse. The dependence of the leading economies of the world on fuel and energy resources, which will only continue in the foreseeable future has led to an increase in interest in this region, where are concentrated about a quarter of the world's hydrocarbon reserves according to some estimates [20]. The enormous hydrocarbon potential of the Arctic is of particular importance in the context of reducing global hydrocarbon reserves, which, with current production volumes, according to experts, will last no more than 50 years [14–15]. At the same time, hydrocarbons are not the only resource in the Arctic. Significant reserves of other minerals (gold, diamonds, nickel, copper, coal, iron, etc.), biological resources, and almost one fifth of the world's freshwater resources are also located in there. In addition, the Arctic has the most important transit and military-strategic importance – here are the shortest transcontinental sea and air routes, as well as convenient positions for deploying missile defense systems and ballistic missiles launching.
2. Motives and interests of the world community in the Arctic region

So far, the exploitation of the natural resources of the Arctic has been dramatically limited to its extreme natural and climatic conditions, as well as life risks and almost constant ice cover of the Arctic Ocean. However, the global warming (the recent observations have shown that the Arctic has warmed up faster than the rest of the globe over the past three decades [17–18]), and as a result the intensive reduction of Arctic ice extent had a significant impact on the potential for realizing the economic potential of this region. Yet today the Arctic Ocean’s waters are becoming increasingly available for new transport routes and reducing costs when using existing ones, exploration and exploitation of mineral deposits, fisheries, and the development of Arctic tourism. Moreover, the navigation along the transport routs of the Arctic Ocean will become year-round, according to some forecasts, by 2050 [19; 21].

All this led to the fact that the development of the Arctic with its new resource and transport and logistics capabilities became one of the most discussed issues at the beginning of the XXI century. The Arctic powers that have direct access to the Arctic Ocean most notably express their interest in this region reclamation. Russia (the area of the Arctic lands is 5.8 million km²); Canada (1.43 million km²); Norway (0.75 million km²); Denmark (0.372 million km²); and the USA (0.126 million km²). As early as the beginning of the 20th century, the vast territories of the Arctic were distributed to national sectors on the principle of sectors to the coasts of the Arctic states (due to the length of the Arctic coast, the share of the Russian sector of the Arctic is about 40%). However, the limits of these sectors cannot be regarded as state borders, which are established in accordance with the Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone (1958). Primarily the sector is a zone of the realization of historically reasoned rights, and interests in the sphere of defense, economics, resource and environment management of a particular Arctic state. The first of the Arctic countries that enshrined in the national legislation their rights to the Arctic sector was Canada, in 1907 adopted the “Act on the North-Western Territories”. Please note that sectoral Arctic division did not cause any objections from non-Arctic states and was approved in the event at the time of its implementation. Currently, according to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982), the Arctic states have an exclusive economic zone (part of the sea, part 200 nautical miles wide) and a continental shelf, within this zone they have sovereign rights for exploration, exploitation and management of natural resources. The Arctic states, as a rule, also include Finland, Sweden and Iceland, since Most of the territories of these countries are located beyond the Arctic Circle. However, these countries do not have any ambition for the development of Arctic resources since they do not have direct access to the Arctic Ocean.

The sectoral principle of separation of the Arctic spaces existed for a long time, but the creation in 1996 of the Arctic Council contributed to the spread in the beginning of the XXI century of the new, so-called “theory of the Arctic internationalization” [2]. The Arctic Council includes representatives from all eight Arctic states and six international organizations of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic. In addition, the Council includes representatives from a number of European countries as observers (Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, France) and Asia (China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, India), as well as twenty different international governmental and non-governmental organizations (for example, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Northern Forum, the University of the Arctic, the World Wide Fund for Nature, etc.). The Arctic Council historically was established to develop cooperation in the field of ecology and ensure the sustainable development of the Arctic territories. In recent years most of the Council's member countries however increasingly discuss the revision of the boundaries of the Arctic sectors and the maximum “internationalization” of the Arctic. Start with, these are United States, repeatedly demonstrating their disagreement with the sectoral principle of the Arctic division. The United States claim to the Arctic territories extending 600 nautical miles from Alaska to the North Pole without accepting any of the options for clarifying the sectoral division of the boundaries of the Arctic shelf [7]. Moreover, the USA constantly pressure on Canada in order to reorient its approaches to sectoral theory, and, thereby, mitigate the risk of legal dependence in the Canadian Arctic sector [8]. Due to the fact that from the international legal point of view, the Arctic space does not belong to any
state, other countries (including their associations) that do not have the Arctic coast and are geographically far from it. For example, the European Union proposed in 2008 to develop a Joint International Arctic treaty, which could be used to prohibit or allow the development of Arctic resources for environmental reasons.

In the context of the growing importance of the Arctic on a global scale and a possible clash of strategic interests in relation to this region, a comparative analysis of the Arctic policy of Russia and the leading world Arctic powers seems to us particularly front and center.

3. The main focal points of the Arctic countries policy of the American North and Northern Europe

Currently, all the major world powers in one form or another have strategic documents promoting their territorial, resource and military-strategic interests in the Arctic region. These documents cover all key areas of foreign policy regulation, from conducting research to planning large-scale military activities [6].

The main strands of the Arctic policy of Canada are defined in Canada's Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future (2009). The document sets forth internal and external interests in the Arctic on four scopes:

- protection of sovereignty by increasing the military presence in the Arctic sector. To this end, Canada is taking measures to resolve border disputes, regularly conducting extensive cartographic research, military exercises, etc. We note that despite the politico-military aspect, the Canadian strategy is aimed primarily at the sustainable development of the Arctic territories. The major motive for increasing military presence is mainly that Canada “does not have the resources to actually control the vast Arctic spaces, nor the experience of military operations in the Arctic” [3];

- sustainable socio-economic and economic development. To this end, it is planned to develop the resource base in the Arctic, primarily oil exploration in the Beaufort Sea, develop appropriate transport and communication infrastructure, implement programs for the development of education systems, health care, tourism, etc.

- protection of the environment and adaptation to climate change. In order to control the environmental situation Canada intends to establish a regime for passing by foreign vessels through Canadian Arctic waters. In addition, regular data are collected on changes in the state of the environment and climate, environmental zones and national parks, etc. were formed [1];

- decentralization of governance and the development of self-government in the Arctic provinces. This priority is a distinctive feature of the Canadian Arctic strategy, since this is the only country where the position of indigenous peoples seriously affects the state policy in the Arctic.

At the end of 2016, Canadian authorities announced the development of a new Arctic policy, the central points of which were the development of transport infrastructure, the development of Arctic resources, and the development of education for the local population. It is noteworthy that the framework of this policy will continue to be applied not only to the three provinces traditionally recognized as Arctic (Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories), but also to the northern territories of Quebec (Nunavik district) and Labrador (Nunatsiavut district).

The main aim of the Arctic policy of Norway is to create conditions in the Arctic for the coexistence of the economy and the local community in an environmentally sound and sustainable state. As priorities, the Norwegian strategy The High North: visions and strategies (2011), sets forth:

- strengthening international cooperation in the Arctic (special emphasis is placed on cooperation with Russia), including the removal of border obstacles and the strengthening of the military presence in order to protect Norwegian interests;

- ensuring socially and environmentally sustainable development of business in the Arctic, including the development of mineral and biological resources, the development of marine biotechnology, energy, Arctic tourism;

- development of knowledge, conducting Arctic R&D and training of qualified personnel, which will contribute to ensuring the leadership of Norway in scientific research in the Arctic;
- creation of efficient and integrated infrastructure conducive to the sustainable development of the Arctic territories, namely the modernization of the transport system and the development of the Arctic service (satellite navigation, communications, monitoring systems);
- solution of environmental tasks related to the vulnerability of the nature of the region, ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources.

The main strand of the **Arctic policy of the Kingdom of Denmark** is focused on the autonomous territory of the country – the island of Greenland, partially located beyond the Arctic Circle and 79% covered with ice. In 2010, Denmark together with Greenland and the Faroe Islands developed the Arctic strategy for 2011–2020 – the Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic. As the main directions, the Strategy establishes:
- ensuring peace and security in the Arctic (priority use of the decisions of the Arctic Council, enhancing the safety of navigation, the exercise of sovereign rights, including by increasing the military presence);
- close international cooperation (solving global problems, expanding regional cooperation, ensuring national interests on a bilateral basis);
- careful attitude towards climate, environment and nature of the Arctic (improving knowledge of climate change impacts, environmental protection and biodiversity conservation);
- sustainable growth, social stability and self-development (exploitation of mineral and biological resources, use of renewable energy sources, development of tourism, integration into international trade, improving of healthcare, education, infrastructure).

The fundamentals of the US Arctic policy were laid down in the Presidential National Security Directive (2009), where the US is positioning itself as an Arctic power, despite the fact that only one out of fifty states Alaska belongs to the Arctic. The most important point in the Directive is to ensure military security, among other things through military means (naval operations, missile defense, deployment of strategic sea-based systems, etc.). The United States proclaims the freedom of trans-Arctic flights and navigation as priority of the Arctic policy, including navigation along the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route, which, according to the United States, should be open to international shipping, which directly contradicts Russia's national interests [12]. Among the primary objectives of the American policy in the Arctic, the Directive also indicates: the development of maritime transport in the Arctic latitudes, the organization of international governance, the extension of the borders of the US continental shelf and the resolution of border issues, environmental protection and conservation of natural resources, sustainable economic development research, cooperation with the Arctic countries. In 2013 the National Strategy for the Arctic Region was adopted in the USA, where particular emphasis was also placed on national security, freedom of navigation and expanding the US economic presence in the Arctic.

The policies of countries not in the “Arctic Five”, but positioning themselves as Arctic powers – Sweden, Iceland and Finland are very similar and focus on external interaction, promotion and strengthening of the role of the European Union and the Arctic Council, as the most important consultative forum on Arctic issues, the implementation of Arctic projects in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and others, the expansion of consultations and cooperation on Arctic issues.

The priorities of the **Swedish Arctic policy** are set forth in Sweden’s strategy for the Arctic region (2011), which is in line with the program of the Swedish Presidency in the Arctic Council in 2011–2013, and include: 1) climate and environment; 2) economic development, in particular, the development of duty-free trade, oil-producing, woodworking and space industries, transport infrastructure, fisheries, reindeer herding, tourism; 3) Human Dimension, mainly minimization of the climate change effects on the health of the indigenous and local population, improvement of living conditions, development of education and culture systems.

The main priorities of the **Finnish Arctic policy** are shown in the Finland’s Strategy for the Arctic Region (2013) and focus on the country's security; ecosystem approach in the exploitation of natural resources; social sustainability and support for indigenous people; building new business
opportunities; international cooperation, also with Russia; Arctic expertise, creation and use of new technologies for the development of the Arctic; development of shipbuilding, forestry and mining, tourism, transport infrastructure. In 2016, the goals and priorities of the Finnish strategy were specified, and special emphasis was placed on strengthening the EU’s Arctic policy, the commercialization of Arctic expertise, sustainable tourism and infrastructure development.

The strategic priorities of the Arctic policy of Iceland are specified in the Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland’s Arctic Policy (2011) and cover a number of areas to address environmental issues and address the effects of anthropogenic climate change; maintaining national security in the region; strengthening and expanding international cooperation in the Arctic and trade relations; social development, in particular, increasing local knowledge about the Arctic and supporting indigenous peoples; economic development, especially for shipping, fishing and tourism; promoting Iceland as a discussion platform on Arctic issues.

A comprehensive analysis of the strategies reviewed indicates that the Arctic states are pursuing a policy aimed at supporting the sustainable development of the Arctic territories. In Canada and the United States, the main aspects of sustainable development mainly are coordination of the interests of mining companies, regional authorities and local communities in obtaining specific economic benefits [16], and secondly, government support for social services. In relation to the indigenous population, there is a policy of settling the claims of indigenous peoples to the right to own land plots and there is a system of economic support for business activities. In the Nordic countries, the sustainable development of the Arctic territories is carried out on the basis of rational nature management, environmental protection and the Human dimension. The policy for promotion livelihood of indigenous people is conducted.

4. Conceptual framework of the national Arctic policy of Russia

The most active peopling and industrial development of the Far North and the Arctic of Russia was carried out in the 20–80s last century. During this period, new settlements were rapidly forming, the location of them were determined mainly by the occurrence of mineral resources. The population has increased exponentially [4]; the industry was developed; intensive development of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and all its infrastructure components were hold [5]. However the collapse of the centralized Soviet system led to a sharp deterioration in the socio-economic situation in the country. Under these conditions, the state considered the support of the North inexpedient and financially burdensome, as a result of which the northern benefits and guarantees provided to citizens living and working here were cut down [10], funds for individual sectors of the economy (coal industry, fishing) [9] were reduced. Later, the North, as an object of state regulation and management, gradually but steadily dropped out of the legislative subject matter and by now the legal and regulatory support for life activity in the North has narrowed to its least developed and habitable part – the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (hereinafter the Arctic zone) [11].

The Arctic zone was identified as a special object of state regulation and management, in the “Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Long Term Perspective” (2008). This document identified the main priorities of the Russian Arctic policy: the use of the Arctic zone as a strategic resource base, ensuring the solution of the tasks of the socio-economic development of Russia; positioning the Arctic as a zone of cooperation and peace; saving unique Arctic ecological systems; use of the Northern Sea Route as a unified national transport communication. The document also identified strategic priorities in the areas of international cooperation, military and environmental security, information technology and communications, as well as the integrated development of the Arctic zone based on the expansion of its resource base.

Adoption of the “Basic Principles” was one of the first steps in the formation of the latest legislation regarding the Arctic zone. Further on, this process was continued by approving the Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone until 2020 (2013), which determined the mechanisms, methods and means for implementing the strategic priorities of the Arctic policy and ensuring the national security of the country based on the integrated socio-economic development of the Arctic
Zone including the population life quality improvement. The implementation of the Strategy was planned in two stages. At the first stage (until 2015), the creation of an institutional framework to strengthen Russia's national security based on the integrated development of the Arctic, including measures of state support for the development of traditional environmental management of the indigenous population, was declared. The second stage (until 2020) was designated as a transition to sustainable innovative socio-economic development of the Arctic zone based on the resource economy model.

The provisions of the Strategy were developed in the state program for the socio-economic development of the Arctic zone until 2020 (2014) and the Presidential Decree, which consolidated the composition of the land territories of the Arctic (2014). The first document as a general goal was secured by the accelerated development of Russia due to the large-scale involvement of the natural possibilities of the Arctic zone in the economy. At the same time, the integrated development of the Arctic macro-region itself was minimized and designated as the creation and development of local living support systems. Let us draw attention to the fact that as one of the resulting indicators of the socio-economic development of the Arctic zone, an increase in labor productivity growth rates was given, despite the fact that with a population of just 1.64% of the Russian population, the share of gross regional product produced here in the total gross regional product of the country is more than 5% (for reference: the volume of GRP per capita in the arctic regions of the Russian Federation is 2,348.8 thousand rubles, with an average for Russia of 510.2 thousand rubles). The second document legally formalized the land area of the Arctic zone, which fully included the territories of the Murmansk region, Nenets, Yamalo-Nenets and Chukotka autonomous districts and sixteen municipalities of five constituent entities of the Russian Federation (later eleven Russian municipalities got the status of “Arctic”).

One of the recent steps in the development of the “Arctic” legislation was the changes in 2017 to the state program for the development of the Arctic zone, which extended its implementation terms until 2025, updated the list of key objectives, indicators and targets, and also provided funding for the implementation of state program activities at the expense of the federal budget (190.452 billion rubles). The main amendments for the State program related to the introduction of subprogrammes for the implementation of specific objectives of the development of the Russian Arctic. In the first one, dedicated to the formation of basic development zones, in addition to the development of the real sectors of the Arctic economy, one of the goals was to create conditions for improving the quality of life of the population. However, the analysis of the stated objectives of achieving the latter is indicative of its declarativeness: among the tasks of improving the quality of life of the population are only the introduction of automated systems for measuring the content of pollutants in the ambient air of populated areas and increasing the level of public safety from emergency situations.

In general, an analysis of the conceptual foundations of the state Arctic policy of Russia suggests that its main purpose is to enhance the exploitation of the natural resources of the Arctic. In our opinion, this view conflicts with the goals of sustainable development, enshrined in the Sustainable Development Agenda until 2030, and form the basis of the Arctic policy of foreign countries.

5. Conclusions

Thus, over the recent ten-year history of Russia's state policy in relation to its Arctic spaces, its main priority remains the development of natural resources [13, 22], i.e. resource model for the development of the Arctic. This, in fact, is its main difference from foreign Arctic strategies, where the model of development of the Arctic territories is based on their sustainable development. The main elements of such a model are economic sustainability (rational, careful use of natural resources, including ensuring the participation of local people in large-scale projects), environmental sustainability (limiting negative environmental impacts and preserving biodiversity), and social sustainability (improving the well-being of the population and providing real opportunities for realizing human and labor potentials). In our opinion, practical implementation of the model when the state vector of the Arctic policy is focused primarily on the social component as the basis for the
integrated balanced development of the Arctic zone and ensuring the national security of this country is more advisable for Russia. Making profit from the exploitation of natural resources should not be decisive, given the extremely destabilizing effect on the sustainability of the Russian economy of heavy dependence on foreign financial resources and foreign markets, as well as export orientation with a predominance of extractive industries in total foreign exchange earnings.

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