National security of the Russian Federation in the Arctic region: geopolitical challenges and strategic decisions

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Abstract. This article aims to highlight the international situation in the Arctic region. The national strategies of the Arctic states studied by the authors lead to the fact that all these program documents have five general directions of state policy in the Arctic: state sovereignty, socio-economic development, infrastructure and communication support, environmental safety, research activities. The authors consider international relations as a separate direction that develops around the Arctic region. In official rhetoric discourse of peaceful interstate political and economic cooperation, openness to dialogue with all international players, both state and commercial dominate. However, in all documents of strategic planning of the Arctic countries, without exception, the prevalence of national interests, its decisive importance in public policy, determination to defend and protect them both by diplomatic and military means are emphasized. Disputes of a territorial nature and regulatory aspects of its joint development have been around the Arctic region for more than a decade. As we see, in practice, these debates are rarely resolved quickly and does not satisfy all parties. It indicates the passive conflict in the region. The participating countries are trying to strengthen their presence in the Arctic territories, but today other players, including the eastern countries, see the Arctic region as very attractive for government projects and public policy. The multiplicity of players in the Arctic complicates the process of negotiation, finding points of contact and building a constructive dialogue. The buildup of military presence in the Arctic threatens not only the participants of the new arms race, but also the entire international community.

1. Introduction
The Arctic is a platform for dialogue [1]. That is what many representatives of the Arctic powers call the Arctic at international platforms and intrastate forums. Despite the fact that the Arctic is also a platform for cooperation, all participants are concerned about state sovereignty and security. In this regard, the Arctic countries develop national strategies, although not only these countries have been working on the development of the Arctic for a long time, but also other economically developed countries interested in elaboration of the most northern territories.

Today it is clear that the territories of the Arctic region are becoming popular due to changes in the climatic factor. In connection with these new opportunities are opening up in the development of territories and mining, as well as profitable investments that can become the basis of economic growth and stability in the future [2].
2. History reference
The development of the Russian Arctic began 10 thousand years ago, in the XV century. The Europeans conducted the first wave of colonization of the North (expansion of Finland, Norway, Sweden). With regards to Russia, our country did not lag behind in expanding its territories.

By the XVI century, the process of mastering the territories was fast, especially in the areas adjacent to the so-called The Northern Sea Route (NSR) [3]. By the 18th century, expeditions had targeted actions, for example, travelers set a goal to create a map. By the middle of the century, the expedition of Vitus Bereng was carried out. He laid an important route from Europe to America. Fedor Litke in 1824 described the shores of the New Earth and other discoveries.

By the 20th century, Russia, as the country with the largest territorial possessions in the Arctic, is actively developing territories and putting in a lot of effort. It is indicative that until the 20th century, Russian policy towards the Arctic territories was purely research, since the 1910s the government has been actively exploring economic aspect of the use of the Arctic territories [4]. Today, the issue of developing the northern territories is as acute as in the 20th century. Geopolitical situation is pushing Russia to more active process of land assimilation, creation of favorable environmental conditions and building of roads and transport routes.

Today, many leading countries considers the Arctic region is not only attractive because of the natural resources, but also due to the opening prospect of the shortest path from west to east. In this regard, policy documents, development strategies, doctrines and international legal norms are being elaborated to ensure legitimacy and rights to the Arctic territories.

3. The Arctic as a subject of strategic interests of nation states
The development of the Arctic, as a region with an extremely high energy and resource potential, has become an important component of the economic development programs of the five Arctic states: Russia, the USA, Canada, Norway and Denmark.

If you refer to the state strategic planning documents for the development of the Arctic of these five countries, you can see that, in general, the declared goals, objectives and principles of the Arctic states in their generalized presentation coincide (Table 1).

We may highlight the following directions of state policy in the Arctic common for all Arctic countries:
1) State sovereignty. Practical implementation of state functions in the Arctic territory, state administration and local self-government improvement, preserving and security enhancement in the Arctic region.
2) Socio-economic development. Living conditions and welfare of the Arctic population improvement, increasing the region’s investment attractiveness, developing and launching large-scale business projects.
3) Infrastructure and communication support. Preservation, improvement and creation of new transport and information communication systems, development of transport accessibility of the Arctic region and its active inclusion in the general telecommunication networks of the Arctic states.

| the Russian Federation | the United States of America | Canada | Norway |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|
| • Fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period up to 2020 and for further perspective [5] | • National Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Region [7] | • Canada’s northern strategy: our North, our heritage, our future [8] | • Norway’s Arctic strategy - between geopolitics and social development [10] |
| • Strategies for the development of the | | • Northern dimension of Canada foreign policy [9] | |
Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and national security for the period up to 2020 [6]

- Integrated socio-economic development.
- Development of science and technology.
- Modern information and telecommunication infrastructure development.
- Environmental safety providing.
- International cooperation in the Arctic.
- Military security providing, protection of the state border of the Russian Federation in the Arctic.

| Promotion of the US National Security Interests. | Ensuring sovereignty. | International cooperation. |
| Environmental safety and preservation of Arctic resources, conducting large-scale and comprehensive scientific research of the Arctic region. | International cooperation. | Socio-economic development. |
| International cooperation. | Environmental protection. | Development of local government |
| Intensification in the Arctic. | Local government development | |

Table 2. Development of the Arctic in the state strategic planning documents of the Arctic countries

4) Environmental Safety. Responsible attitude to the nature of the Arctic, environmental protection, preservation of the unique ecosystem and climate regime of the region, minimizing the negative anthropogenic impact on the Arctic flora and fauna, the use of environmentally safe technologies in the extraction and operation of energy resources.

5) Research activities. Initiation and financing of research projects on the study of the economic potential of the Arctic region, natural and climatic characteristics, monitoring the environmental situation and predicting changes in the climatic and hydrodynamic regime of the Arctic.

The implementation of the goals and objectives of the above areas of the Arctic countries state policy is complex.

As a separate direction in state programs for the development the Arctic we should highlight international relationships that are closely connected with the Arctic states sovereignty. In official rhetoric, discourse of peaceful intergovernmental political and economic cooperation prevails. We observe openness to dialogue with all international players, both state and commercial. However, in all documents of strategic planning of the Arctic countries, without exception, the domination of national interests, its decisive importance in public policy, determination to defend and protect them both by diplomatic and military means are emphasized. The latter thesis is also developed in military strategies, doctrines and concepts.

The Arctic is an extremely attractive region in terms of economic potential. Successful and effective implementation of this potential in the long run leads not only to huge financial gains, but also to increased international political and economic influence. However, the development of the Arctic due to the specific natural and climatic conditions is impossible without significant state and commercial investments and corresponding technical capacities for the exploitation of resources.

For several decades various disputes have arisen around the Arctic region regarding the territorial separation of the region and the regulatory and legal aspects of its joint development.

The Russian Federation claims the so-called exclusive rights to the geological shelf of the Arctic, which includes such objects as the Lomonosov Ridge, the Podvodnikov Basin, the Mendeleev Rise, as
well as the monopoly on the Northern Sea Route (NSR). Since the beginning of the 2000s, Russia has defended its position on the Arctic region in the UN commissions, in intergovernmental organizations, at international forums, in diplomatic meetings and negotiations on the Arctic. Denmark and Canada argues with Russia, as these countries also have territorial legal claims to expand their part of the shelf in the area of the Lomonosov Ridge. Canada has been arguing with Denmark over Hans Island and with the United States over the maritime border in the Beaufort Sea and the status of the Northwest Passage. Such clashes of national interests are rarely resolved permanently. Compromise achievement may take decades of difficult diplomatic negotiations. One of the most illustrative examples is the forty-year dispute between Russia and Norway about the division of the so-called “gray zone” in the Barents Sea. Interstate meetings and consultations on this issue began in 1970 between the Soviet Union and the Kingdom of Norway. The agreement on joint Russian-Norwegian exploration work, which enabled both countries to freely develop part of the Arctic shelf, was signed only in 2010.

The resolution of such interstate disputes in the Arctic region is a rather hot topic, which is annually updated by new requests from Arctic countries for the expansion of territories and the rights to exploit various resources.

In addition, the topic of militarization of the Arctic region, along with territorial disputes, is the most relevant in the Arctic international agenda. In the subarctic regions of the Russian Federation and the United States of America, elements of missile attack warning systems are located. Behind the Arctic Circle there are strategically important Russian military ports and bases. Arctic states regularly conduct military training and strengthen their military presence in the Arctic. At the same time, the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Alliance are making mutual accusations of escalating international tensions in the Arctic region.

Besides Russia, the USA, Canada, Norway and Denmark, the interests of such states as Iceland, Finland and Sweden are represented in the process of the Arctic development. Together with the five Arctic states, they are part of the “Arctic Council”, which defines program areas and regulates the organizational aspects of the region exploration and the protection of the Arctic natural complex. Thirteen countries are represented on the Arctic Council as observers.

It should be particularly noted that in the last 15 years, East Asian states have shown active interest to the Arctic region. In particular, this is the Republic of Korea, which adopted the strategy “Arctic Policy of the Republic of Korea” in 2013 [12]. In Japan, the Arctic strategy (Japan’s Arctic Policy) [13] was approved in October 2015. China adopted the strategy of China's Arctic Policy in January 2018 [14]. They are actively exploring the possibilities of expanding international cooperation in the Arctic, in particular, the possibilities and prospects of operating the Northern Sea Route and other projects of a commercial and scientific nature [15].

Thus, many states are involved in the affairs of the Arctic region along with the commercial companies. Their positions on various issues of the Arctic development often conflict with each other, the extent of their influence on the political and economic situation in the region differs according to a complex set of historical, geographical and military infrastructural factors. The realities of international relations represent a multilateral and multi-level clash of political and economic interests in the Arctic region, which increases the conflict potential of the situation in the Arctic, the complexity and multifactor character of which makes political and economic forecasting difficult.

4. The national security of the Russian Federation in the Arctic: defense, infrastructure, ecology

The Russian Federation, being an Arctic state and possessing broad economic, research, technological and military capabilities, has one of the key roles in the development of the Arctic.

We present some statistical data on the Russian Arctic [16] [17]. The area of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation is about 9 million km². More than 2.5 million people live in the Russian Arctic, which represents about 40% of the population of the entire Arctic. In the Russian Arctic, 12-15% of the country's GDP is created, about a quarter of Russian exports are provided.
Today, the main areas of financing the development of the Russian Arctic are:

1. **Study and development of the energy-resource potential of the Arctic region. Firstly, there are the studies of the Arctic shelf and its hydrocarbon reserves.**

   According to modern research [18] [19] [20], there are 90 billion barrels of oil in the Arctic. With average world prices for oil from $ 50 to $ 70 per barrel, the profit from the sale of this stock will be from 4.5 to 6.3 trillion $. In addition to hydrocarbons, such minerals as rare earth metals (Yakutia), diamonds (Arkhangelsk region and Yakutia), tin (Chukotka), gold (Chukotka, Taimyr), platinum (Taimyr), nickel (Murmansk region, Taimyr), copper (Taimyr, Murmansk region), cobalt (Taimyr), antimony (Taimyr), coal (Taimyr, Vorkuta, Chukotka), apatite (Murmansk region), nepheline ore (Murmansk region) are also represented in the Russian Arctic.

   Improving technologies for the extraction and processing of mineral data will also increase the federal budget revenues and at the same time make the operation of the above resources environmentally safe [21].

2. **Development of the transport and communication connection. First of all, we consider the Northern Sea Route and its infrastructure in the aspect of the legal mode of operation.**

   Due to global warming, NSR is becoming more and more accessible and, being the shortest route by sea between Europe and Asia, it becomes more commercially and economically attractive.

3. **Ensuring defense. Modernization of military infrastructure and armaments, intensification of the Russian Armed Forces in the Arctic region.**

   The specificity of the Arctic is such that, apart from an appeal to international law and history, in the competition for resources and territory demonstration of military power and infrastructural and technological potential is also used. States claiming priority rights in this region should combine the possibilities of diplomatic, economic and military influence. Today, the Arctic is one of the most illustrative examples of the use of so-called smart power, when soft power methods (diplomacy, economic impact, cultural expansion) and hard power methods (military power) are combined in politics to form a winning strategy [22].

   In the Russian Federation at the state level, the formalization of such a strategy can be considered the “Strategy for the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and ensuring national security for the period up to 2020”, the general provisions of which were given in Table 1.

   In the context of ensuring national security of the Russian Arctic, the topic of comprehensive security is of particular interest in this Strategy of the Russian Arctic Development. The concept of comprehensive security is a conceptual basis for the state view on ensuring national security in the Russian Arctic. In the Strategy of the Russian Arctic Development the disclosure of this term is not given. In the legislative and law enforcement practice of the Russian state, the concept “security” is primarily defined as the state of protection, depending on a specific legal act of an individual, society and the state or property, natural resources, etc. [23]. The statesmen of the Russian Federation also offered their understanding of comprehensive security. Thus, the current Minister of Defense, S. K. Shoigu, expressed the opinion that “comprehensive security” is a kind of reaction to the emergence of the concept of “complex risks”, and its meaning is that “the security of a country is not viewed as a separate local task, but as complex of tasks” [24]. Member of the Federation Council and coordinator of the Federation Council Committee on Defense and Security, Yu. L. Vorobiev, suggested considering comprehensive security as a new paradigm for the development of civilization, and all other types of security: state, international, military, information, natural and artificial should be subordinated to the human security interests” [25]. In Russian legal science, comprehensive security is also commonly understood as the complex phenomenon of multiple and multifactorial security. For example, the Russian sociologists V. A. Vinokurov and S. V. Nemchenko define comprehensive security as “a set of human security states, his rights and freedom, property, and natural resources” [26].
The concept of comprehensive security in relation to the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic can be represented as a set of measures to ensure the national security of the Russian Arctic in three areas: military defense, infrastructure system, environmental protection.

**Defense capability:**
- Ensuring an appropriate operational regime in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, including maintaining the required level of combat readiness of the general purpose troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation;
- Comprehensive provision of combat and mobilization readiness at a level necessary and sufficient to solve the tasks of preventing force and aggression pressure against the Russian Federation and its allies, ensuring Russia's sovereign rights in the Arctic;
- Improving the structure, composition, military-economic, material and technical support of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation;
- Improving the control of airspace and surface situation;
- Dual-use technologies applying in the interests of the integrated solution of the tasks of defense, security and ensuring sustainable socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation;
- Hydrographic work conducting to change geographic coordinates defining the position of the baselines for the counting of the width of the territorial waters, the economic zone and the continental shelf.

**Infrastructure:**
- Development of a unified Arctic transport system of the Russian Federation as a national maritime highway, focused on year-round functioning, including the Northern Sea Route and meridional river and railway communications, as well as the airport network;
- Transport infrastructure improvement in the regions of the Arctic continental shelf development;
- Restructuring and growth in freight traffic along the Northern Sea Route;
- Improvement of the regulatory and legal framework of the Russian Federation in terms of the state regulation of navigation in the Northern Sea Route water area;
- Organizational structure improvement of management and navigation safety in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation;
- Creation and development of the integrated security system of the Arctic shipping, traffic management in areas of heavy ship traffic;
- Development of the Russian icebreaker fleet based on modern technologies as the part of the state programs implementation for the construction of icebreakers, including nuclear power plants component;
- The Arctic ports modernization and new port-industrial complexes creation in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation;
- State support for the implementation of the "northern delivery" of goods and products export in the «river-sea» transport schemes, including the transport vessels construction providing the "northern delivery";
- The railway network development in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation
- The main road network formation in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation;
- Development of the effective system of aviation services in the Arctic regions;
- Small aircraft transportation system development in order to meet the needs for air transportation and provide its availability in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation;
- The formation of modern transport and logistics hubs for the provision of main line and international transportation on the basis of federal airports and regional airports of low flight intensity;
- Technical equipment and arrangement of checkpoints across the state border of the Russian Federation in the Arctic;
- Development and introduction of modern vehicles adapted for use in arctic conditions.

**Environmental Safety:**
— ensuring the conservation of the biological diversity of the Arctic flora and fauna in the context of expanding economic activities and global climate change;
— development and expansion of the network of specially protected natural areas and water areas of federal and regional importance;
— the elimination of environmental damage caused by past economic, military and other activities in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation;
— minimization of the negative anthropogenic impact on the Arctic zone environment, due to the current economic and other activities;
— improvement of the state environmental monitoring system in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation;
— development and implementation of economic mechanisms that stimulate the reproduction and rational use of mineral and biological resources, energy and resource conservation, recycling of associated petroleum gas in oil-producing areas.

Thus, ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation in the Arctic zone from a strategic point of view is a complex process involving the implementation of goals and objectives of a military, infrastructural and environmental-protective nature. To implement state policy in these areas, federal programs have been developed and significant financial resources have been allocated for their implementation.

5. Conclusion or alarming prospects for the Arctic

Studying the national security of the Russian Federation in the Arctic region, one cannot ignore the fact that the strengthening of Russia's military presence in the Arctic meets an ambiguous international reaction. With the collapse of the USSR, Russia's defense capability in this region has significantly weakened. Today’s modernization of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in the Arctic is presented in the official Russian rhetoric:
• as the return of the necessary degree of military control over this territory with an aim to protect it;
• as a program part of the general modernization of the Russian Army;
• as achievement of the adequate balance of military presence in comparison with other Arctic states that are members of NATO, an approximation to strategic parity in the region.

Until recently, the United States, Canada, Norway, and Denmark predominantly responded to the increased military presence of the Russian Federation in the Arctic, either by diplomatic statements or by adjustments to the Arctic strategic planning programs and military strategies, doctrines and concepts. At present, the protest against Russia's actions in the Arctic region is taking place not so much through the diplomacy of the nation states, as through the North Atlantic alliance. Thus, on April 4, 2018, Alliance General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg made a statement about NATO’s intention to build up naval forces in the Arctic in response to Russia's increased military presence and modernization of its weapons in the region [27].

This situation is extremely dangerous. The Arctic, being an important region not only from the point of view of economic potential, but also in terms of its natural and climatic significance for the entire planet, today can become another frontier of growth of international confrontation and global tensions. Relationships of the parties in the Arctic region have never been simple and conflict-free. Nevertheless, the real resolution of mutual contradictions was achieved only through peaceful negotiations, through cooperation on the principles of mutual respect and trust. We can understand Russia's concern about the presence of powerful military contingents of other states in the Arctic region. Similarly, one can understand the concerns of the United States, Canada, Norway and Denmark about the intensification of the Russian Armed Forces in the Arctic. However, firstly, it seems wrong to confront Russia through NATO. This reinforces the claim that in the Arctic, the United States, Canada, Norway and Denmark are represented not only as national states defending their national interests, but also as members of the North Atlantic Alliance, seeking to expand NATO's military control zone in the Arctic. Secondly, the peace initiative is weakening every year, which is
Certainly counterproductive for all Arctic states. Until one of the parties offers diplomatic negotiations on the demilitarization of the Arctic zone, the conflict potential of the region will increase along with the buildup of the military presence of the Arctic countries in it. A peaceful resolution of the situation will require the political will of all parties of the conflict and long interstate diplomatic work. However, ultimately, this is in the interests of the national security of all the Arctic countries and the planet as a whole. We may conclude that the expert communities of the states of the Arctic Council should conduct joint and coordinated work on analyzing and forecasting the development of the military-political situation in the region and suggest proposals for the demilitarization of the Arctic zone and the peaceful cessation of interstate confrontation in the Arctic.

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