 Polar Record 52 (267): 672–679 (2016). © *Cambridge University Press 2016.* *doi:10.1017/S0032247416000528*

Defining security in a changing Arctic: helping to prevent an Arctic security dilemma

Marzia Scopelliti and Elena Conde Pérez
Department of International Public and Private Law, Complutense University of Madrid, Ciudad Universitaria, s/n, 28040, Madrid, Spain (marziasc@ucm.es)

Received January 2016; revised version received July 2016

ABSTRACT. In recent years, radical changes such as rapid warming and ice retreat have become evident in the Arctic region, as recognised by the scientific community, as well as Arctic and non-Arctic states. Against this background, where the Arctic is accumulating economic importance and geopolitical significance for Arctic states and international stakeholders, the main regional actors have engaged in increased cooperation efforts, which is in contrast to the often invoked talk about an imminent conflict or 'race for resources in the region'. At the same time, modernisation and expansion of military activities and capabilities have been pursued by several Arctic states. While these measures cannot be exclusively attributed to a militarisation of the Arctic and require further discussion, a misperception of such actions may result in the destabilisation of regional cooperation efforts. Furthermore, when considered in a broader context, possible threats to peaceful coexistence in the Arctic are more likely to arise from the present global situation. For example, the invasion of Ukraine has provoked a partial shift in regional cooperation and an uncontrolled spillover effect of the conflict between Russia and Western countries could disrupt regional stability. Drawing on the perspective of International Relations (IR) literature, and considering the absence of a regional institution devoted to security issues, this article highlights the importance of adopting confidence- and security-building measures among all relevant actors in order to create a forum for the discussion of 'hard' security topics, to prevent any destabilising effect on Arctic cooperation and security. Such measures may be promoted within existing fora, primarily the Arctic Council.

Introduction

In recent years, the international relevance of the Arctic region has increased due to anthropogenic climate change which is considered the primary cause of rapid warming and sea ice loss (IPCC 2014; UNFCCC 1992) opening the region to new threats and opportunities, and the growing global demand for commodities. Although complete access to the region is still impeded by the high costs of operating in extreme climate conditions and hostile environments, today the Arctic is considered to have great economic potential, as the U.S. Geological Survey estimates that it holds approximately 90 billion barrels of oil, 1,669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids (Bird and others 2008: 4). In the same way, the ice retreat (with an annual mean extent of Arctic sea ice dropped between 1979 and 2012 by close to half a million km^2 per decade), is opening possibilities for navigation through new emerging sea routes, and greater availability of fishery resources (IPCC 2013). As a result, the Arctic is accumulating economic importance and geopolitical significance for Arctic states and international stakeholders. In view of these economic benefits, several academics (see Olesen 2014), and especially media commentators (*The Economist* 1843; Rosenthal 2012), have warned about the emergence of an 'Arctic race', a scenario in which state powers and other stakeholders will compete against each other in a scramble for territory and natural resources (Borgerson 2008).

While disputing this hypothesis, which in the authors' view does not take sufficient account of the degree of cooperation and institutionalisation achieved at the regional level, of which the adoption of regional sectoral agreements by Arctic States, the establishment of the permanent Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS) or the current Council's membership enlargement are all valuable examples; this article does not exclude the possibility for the regional stability to be further strengthened, especially when it comes to hard security issues. Still largely unaddressed as they are not predominant in the Arctic, they constitute an element of the broadened security concept that is gaining ground in the region and need therefore to be tackled since they represent a precondition for good governance, enhanced cooperation and regional economic stability. Describing the emergence of some trends at odds with the cooperation achieved by Arctic states, the article investigates the potential emergence of a regional security dilemma resulting from the policies adopted by national states and the lack of a regional forum dedicated to the discussion of military security-related issues. We also consider the possibility of a further exacerbation of military security tensions by a shift in regional cooperative efforts since the break out of the conflict that opposes Russia and Western countries over Ukraine. Taking into account these variables and analysing them through the literature of International Relations, the article poses the question of whether these dynamics can be deterred. We argue that the prevention of negative shifts or downgrading of Arctic cooperation

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247416000528 Published online by Cambridge University Press

might be realised by the adoption of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), opening a dialogue on hard politics within the Arctic Council.

The Arctic region

In defining the Arctic, this article adopts the geographical definition used by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), which delineates the region as the terrestrial and marine areas north of the Arctic Circle, at a latitude of 66°32′N (AMAP 2009: 10). Therefore, it extends across North America, northern Europe and northern Asia, encompassing the territories of eight states: Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States of America.

Politically, the Arctic is considered a remarkable example of intergovernmental and regional cooperation, the result of coordinated activities in non-strategic areas, such as scientific research and environmental protection, set up by Arctic states during the 'desecuritisation' process started by the end of the Cold War (Åtland 2008). The governance structure initiated in the 1990s has evolved towards the creation of an institutionalised system that rests mainly on the rules of international law provided by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982) and on the cooperation mechanisms of the Arctic Council. UNCLOS is the international legal framework that, in the absence of a regional treaty, most applies to the Arctic Ocean, defining the maritime areas of the coastal states, and providing the legal constraints for the resolution of emerging disputes or claims over unresolved maritime boundaries (see IBRU 2015; Byers 2014). Seven of the Arctic states have ratified UNCLOS, and even though the United States has not acceded to UNCLOS, it accepts its key provisions as customary international law.

The institutionalisation of the Arctic as a region has been developing on the basis of soft-law instruments as well, different from those of hard-law because without legally binding force and half-way between law-making process and political commitment. Building on the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS 1991), the Arctic Council was established in 1996 as the main political forum dedicated to Arctic governance. It consists of the eight Arctic states and six Permanent Participants (PPs) representing the region's indigenous populations. Though decision-making power is limited to Council Members and PPs, non-Arctic states and organisations can be granted the right to participate in Council meetings as observers. Despite being prevented from adopting binding decisions and from addressing military security, as this last subject was excluded from the Council's mandate at American and Russian insistence and in order to establish an effective dialogue on less controversial topics, the emergence of cooperation around other relevant matters has been possible. For example, soft security issues were recently discussed during the *Agreement on Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic* in 2011 (SAR 2011) and the *Agreement on Cooperation on Maritime Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response* in 2013 (OPPRA 2013), both adopted as binding agreements under the auspices of the Arctic Council, which reflects its increased decision-shaping power and the possible evolution of this forum towards an autonomous international organisation.

Defining security in a changing Arctic

Notwithstanding soft security concerns that have gained increasing attention worldwide and in the Arctic, this article discusses interstate relations in the region by giving particular emphasis to military dynamics, as those challenges that may jeopardise regional stability given the absence of a forum where these can be permanently and unambiguously addressed as part of a comprehensive regional dialogue, along with and in promotion of the more pressing human, environmental and economic dimensions. Therefore, even though within the study of International Relations the concept of security is now increasingly understood as a complex phenomenon and expressed by a variety of dimensions and holistic perspectives (such as *soft security, human security,* and *environmental security*, among others), the authors refer to a classic concept of security (*negative/hard security*) similar to the one adopted by the realist tradition of International Relations (Murray 2014; Rothschild 1995; Waltz 1979), to explore the potential for an Arctic security dilemma deriving from an increased military presence in the region or from non-Arctic geopolitical development reverberating into the Arctic and, therefore, of effective means to prevent situations destabilizing of the regional cooperation.

Considering the anarchic nature of the international system, where the lack of a world government means that states are constantly uncertain about their relations and concerned with their safety, negative/hard security is a state-centric concept related to the identification of threats and the use of the military to address issues of immediate and existential danger (Hoogensen Gjørv 2012: 839–840). Under this paradigm, states will identify a strategy to pursue their goals (whether based on conflict or cooperation), and, in cases where the increase of state power may be perceived as offensive, may adopt foreign policy strategies that will cause anxiety in their counterparts (Herz 1950). In such cases, a security dilemma is triggered, generating an action-reaction mechanism that might, in the worst- case scenario, escalate to violent conflict. Of course, the severity of this dilemma and its outcome may be balanced depending on the context and with regard to several factors, such as military technology or geography (Montgomery 2006: 151). Nevertheless, most possibilities of reassurance, and therefore solutions to the dilemma, will rest on the capacity to distinguish between offensive and defensive power, on the willingness of states to reveal their reciprocal postures, thus

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247416000528 Published online by Cambridge University Press

becoming more vulnerable, or on the existence of a sense of community (Åtland 2014; Montgomery 2006).

In this view, confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) – which consist of structural preventive actions adopted in the form of military information exchange, dialogue on military planning and activities, or measures for verification and compliance – can enhance transparency and trust, preventing the emergence of frictions and ameliorating the security dilemma (Schaller 2014; Wallensteen and Möller 2003). In the Arctic, these measures first emerged during the Cold War era, when the region was a hotspot of superpower conflict, and the security dilemma was a prominent characteristic of Arctic politics. Beginning in 1987, the so called Murmansk Initiative promoted the pacification of the region (Gorbachev 1987), and due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the decrease in the Arctic's political and strategic importance, a normalisation was finally reached through states' cooperation in non-military issues, allowing the development of the region as a low-tension area throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.

Today, by contrast, while the Arctic remains largely pervaded by the peaceful partnership between coastal and non-coastal states (see Arctic Council 2013; Arctic Council 2011; Ilulissat Declaration 2008), and any prospect of imminent military conflict is unlikely, the recurrence of a military security dilemma cannot be completely ruled out. Climate change and a retreating ice has made the Arctic emerging on the global stage, meeting the ambitions of an increased number of actors and stakeholders beyond states, who are concerned for global energy security and large scale resources exploitation, therefore seeking for an Arctic role. The geostrategic result of an increasingly accessible Arctic might be a change in power dynamics affecting Arctic states relations. As stated by Pincus (2015: 162): 'As ship traffic, mining, fishing, and tourism increases in coming decades, there will be more national assets to protect, and a greater need to assert sovereignty and defend territory through physical presence of armed forces.' Moreover, national security implications, already a concern for several Arctic states, largely Russia, are likely to negatively influence Arctic cooperation, especially if there is no permanent regional forum where military security issues can be addressed and the region follows this pattern of globalization, adding complexity to its broad security system.

However, even if regional governance structures help prevent the flare up of an intra-Arctic military conflict, this does not prevent the tightening between global and regional political dynamics. In effect, the Arctic region cannot be considered as a closed and isolated system from the rest of the world (Käpylä and Mikkola 2015; Heininen 2011). Accordingly, external events may change unpredictably or destabilise the regional security environment, affecting cooperation in non-strategic areas that are typically disconnected from military strategic thinking (Heininen 2011). Likewise, while the deepening of cooperation is underway, the creation of a dialogue on issues of military security may be required. This would serve to clarify the postures maintained by individual states in considering matters related to their domestic domain and would help prevent destabilising situations, such as the current one in which regional cooperation has been affected as a spillover effect derived from the tensions between Russia and the Western countries over Ukraine, underlying how a non-Arctic event may have an impact on Arctic cooperation and security.

Contrasting trends

Following the planting of a Russian flag on the North Pole sea floor in 2007 by a noted Russian scientist and member of the Duma, major policy announcements regarding the need to secure the Arctic were made by all Arctic, and even some none-Arctic, states and institutions (Conde Pérez 2015: 151; European Parliament 2008). Although the flag planting was a political gesture with no legal significance, it awakened the concern of Arctic states towards the regional security environment, specifically causing anxiety about Russian behaviour. In the wake of this situation, and due to the receding ice, the littoral Arctic countries, in particular, adopted national security and defence strategies affirming an increased concern for the need of constabulary capacity to monitor and patrol Arctic borders and waters, and their intentions to increase military forces to protect their national interests in the region (Huebert et al. 2012; Wezeman 2012). Since 2007, alongside multilateral and bilateral cooperation efforts, the willingness to secure the Arctic has been a common discourse of all Arctic states, but it has been articulated with disparities. Non-littoral states have traditionally been more oriented to achieve stability through international cooperation. On the contrary, the United States, Canada and Denmark officially adopted strategic documents in which they affirmed a willingness to increase or modernise military capabilities, even if, in practice, they have actually postponed or scaled down these intentions (Hilde 2013). This signals a trend, common to Arctic countries, to increasingly include the region in their foreign policy strategies as a matter of national security and as a projection of their sovereignty, recognising the challenges posed by an increasingly accessible Arctic, of interest to the international community. But it also reveals a difficulty in the realisation of these strategies due to economic determinants, for instance the economic crisis of 2008, in light of the high costs that a renewal of military capabilities or the construction of powerful icebreakers supposes or still, and especially in the case of the United States, for the need to address and cope with more pressing military concerns elsewhere.

Referring to Russia, the consideration of its positioning towards Arctic states deserves a more in-depth discussion, as the Kremlin's current foreign policy is often characterised by a certain ambiguity (Yarovoy 2014). On the one hand, a principal determinant of its regional policy is the country's dependence on the Russian Arctic

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247416000528 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in terms of economic security. This is strictly related to national security calculations (Putin 2014), but even more with the need to maintain regional cooperation, as good neighbour relations represent a precondition for the development of the Russian Arctic and the resources contained therein. On the other hand, Moscow is adopting an increasingly assertive posture through military presence in several regional contexts (Zellen 2013; Kramska 2011), and primarily in the Arctic, as a means to restore its status of great power (Murray 2014). More precisely, Russia is modernising its Northern Fleet of strategic nuclear submarines and has established a new Arctic brigade close to the Finnish border (Klimenko 2014). In addition to the increase in general military spending by 8.1 per cent in 2014 (Blenckner 2015), the Kremlin declared a new military doctrine signalling the US and NATO's enlargement as the primary threat to Russian security (Blenckner 2015: 2, 3) and has maintained erratic relations with other Arctic states, particularly Norway.

Between Russia and Norway, peaks in positive relations have alternated with downturns such as after the Russian military exercises along the Arctic coast in March 2014 (Klimenko 2014), or Russian Northern Fleet patrol activities around Spitsbergen (Heininen and Sergunin 2014). Following these actions, a joint statement on the need to deepen military cooperation was signed by the foreign ministers of Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden (Haglund and others 2015), signaling the perception of Russia as an aggressive neighbour and weakening the peaceful pathway that followed the negotiated settlement of the longstanding maritime dispute with Norway in the Barents Sea in 2010 (Conde Pérez 2016). The recent participation of the Kremlin in the Arctic high seas fisheries agreement, the Declaration to Prevent Unregulated Fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean of 2015 (Oslo Declaration 2015), preceded by an increased Russian military aircraft activity closer to the United States' Arctic territory or by the supposed navigation of Russian submarines into Swedish waters, is yet another example of the contradictory Russian attitude in search for a balance between strategic collaboration and self-assurance.

This unpredictable Russian behavior has triggered a sense of insecurity among other Arctic states that has heightened the level of military tension in the region and, as a result, the Nordic countries have expanded military spending and started several coordinated actions to secure their borders. Together with the condemnation of its military action in Ukraine and the sanctions imposed on Russia at the international level, Canada under the Harper government was publicly critical and supported a strong anti-Russian campaign from the outbreak of the conflict. As Chair of the Arctic Council and a state committed to the maintenance of a stable and rule-based Arctic where the rights of sovereign states are respected (Huebert 2013), Canada was the first state to introduce sanctions against Russia as a warning to Moscow that aggressive actions like those in Crimea would not be accepted in the Arctic. More cautious positions maintained by the remaining Arctic states have not prevented a freezing of the political dialogue within the Council (Heininen and Sergunin 2014). Indeed, the result has been the absence of Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Iqaluit, the suspension of several co-ordinated actions, such as the Northern Eagle naval exercise between Norway, Russia and the US (Käpylä and Mikkola 2015; Klimenko 2014), and the organisation of the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable without Russia.

It should also be specified that many regional partnership and cooperative projects continue to evolve. While this can primarily be ascribed to economic logic or to the will of forging closer relations against external competitors, it certainly contributes to an amelioration of regional tensions. Moreover, the change of chairmanship at the Arctic Council and, at the national level in Canada, could represent a possibility to resume the dialogue with Russia where interrupted. All Arctic countries have not only an interest in maintaining regional stability as a precondition for the Arctic to prosper in an atmosphere of safety and environmental sustainability, but also in maintaining Russia's engagement on themes that relate to the cooperative regional agenda. The emergence of the Arctic as an area of global interest, calls on the need to establish joint actions to manage the risks deriving from its internationalisation, primarily including search and rescue operations and environmental disaster responses exercises. This rests on the existence of friendly relationship among regional actors, while represents a possibility to deepen regional cooperation.

As a result, the cooling of relations between Arctic states and Russia can only have negative and undesirable impacts regionally, and the adoption of Arctic-specific CSBMs, such as instituting a permanent dialogue on military security issues, seems a viable option to reverse this trend, mitigate any regional security dilemma, and keep Russia engaged in regional cooperation.

Proposals for the institution of an Arctic security dialogue

While previous research provides a description and context for the discussion of CSBMs that might be suitable for the Arctic region (Bergh and Oldberg 2011; Schaller 2014), a general inventory of Arctic CSBMs could be proposed bearing in mind the legacy and efficacy of the Murmansk Initiative where, besides proposals on arm control and nuclear disarmament, also action for peaceful international cooperation were undertaken.

Inspired by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) principles and documents, an inventory of CSBMs exportable to the Arctic region could include a general dissemination of military strategy, defence policies and defence budgets; a regular exchange of information concerning existing forces and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247416000528 Published online by Cambridge University Press

personnel, as well as their peacetime location or eventual deployment; information and communication of military activities and exercises; the adoption of minor verification measures, in the form of visit conducted on a voluntary basis and finally, a clear revelation of the predominantly defensive nature of Arctic military presence. This would foster transparency and predictability in the military. Most importantly, the adoption and follow-up of these measures could be done along with other activities, such as search and rescue exercises, interlinking the multi-faceted character that security is assuming in the region, and contributing to the strengthening of a comprehensive concept of Arctic security.

Referring to the adoption of some of these measures in greater depth, the article explores how a more formal and transparent dialogue on military security issues may be initiated within international, regional or sub-regional fora. To date, apart from the partially weakened and informal cooperation that has taken place within the annual meetings of the Chiefs of Defence Staff of all Arctic states, a unique example of dialogue on hard security issues cancelled in 2014 due to the developments in Ukraine (Klimenko 2015), the Arctic region has no institution dedicated to military security. Moreover, while an Arctic soft security agenda has been undertaken within the Arctic Council and recently discussed within NATO, there is no regional forum in which Russia and Arctic NATO members can discuss military security (Åtland 2014), even though Russia is a key actor for Arctic stability and NATO enlargement is one of its most pressing concerns. The discussion around traditional security is a limited one, and mostly takes place bilaterally and in less institutionalised frameworks. As described by Rosamond (2011: 35): '[In the Arctic] there is a clear avoidance of debates on military security issues. However, avoiding a dialogue does not necessarily produce a more stable strategic environment.' In the lack of an institution dedicated to hard security in the region, and as a way to solve this vacuum, several alternatives can be considered.

Since the start of the Ukrainian conflict, Sweden, which, together with Finland, is the only Western Arctic state that is not a member of NATO, has embraced NATO's interest to expand and redefine its regional role. Sweden has asked for increased cooperation with the Alliance as it feels concerned over the actions undertaken by Russia in Ukraine, and is afraid that a conflict in the Baltic region would spillover to other neighboring countries (see Blenckner 2015; Heininen 2014). But when exploring the possibility of a NATO mandate in the Arctic, no agreement has emerged among regional actors. Predictably, Russia remains hostile to this option, mindful of the Cold War rivalries. In the same way, Canada under the previous Harper government, also opposed NATO regional involvement, as it feared this could potentially open issues of national security and sovereignty in the Arctic to non-regional actors. Conversely, Norway has been increasingly supportive of a regional role for the Alliance, followed in this respect by Denmark and Iceland (Depledge 2015; Regehr 2013).

Regardless of these divergent views, one should bear in mind that neither Sweden nor Finland as non-members of NATO would ultimately remain excluded by such a forum. This would not only leave the pending issue of cooperative regional security unsolved but, in the event of NATO enlargement, would also cause Russian discontent, as the two Nordic countries and their defence frameworks have traditionally remained neutral. Their inclusion would reverse the present defensive strategic balance in favour of the US and its allies, re-awakening a Russian fear of encirclement.

On the other hand, Sweden and Finland's isolation could be solved by an engagement of the European Union (EU) in Arctic security consideration, which would provide assistance against aggression to EU members under the Lisbon Treaty. This option may, however, proves to be cumbersome and ineffective (Depledge 2015). Moreover, even if the EU has traditionally had good relations with Russia, these have been negatively influenced by the crisis in Ukraine as well. The sanctions imposed by the EU, particularly the ban on hi-tech oil equipment exports, have affected Russian Arctic resource exploitation projects, and its foreseen extension until the end of January represents an obstacle to the formalisation of its observer status in the Arctic Council. Other possibilities include, for example, the creation of Arctic subgroups within the United Nations or the OSCE, since all Arctic states are parties and bound to the mechanisms of confidence and security-building created within the latter. Notwithstanding, this option may be excluded due to the aversion of Arctic states, particularly the United States, Russia and Canada, to open the region to third parties or to disclose their security policies, which closely relate to national sovereignty, in multilateral fora. Therefore, as argued by Regehr (2013: 4), 'the appropriate forum for security cooperation in the Arctic needs to be the common creation of the member states of the Arctic Council.' Potentially, however, such a forum already exists.

Although it is undeniable that, as some academics claim, an extension of the Arctic Council's mandate to deal with security raises many questions related to the divergence of views on the need to open a dialogue on hard security complementary to the more pressing one on soft security issues (Nicol and Heininen 2014), or to the role assigned to indigenous peoples in such an architecture without undermining their participation (Lackenbauer 2012), it remains a theoretically attractive long-term proposal, and it is supported by the authors for several reasons. First, the Arctic Council was established as a soft-law instrument and a footnote on Article 1 of the Ottawa Declaration, specifies that the Council 'should not address issues of military security' (Ottawa Declaration 1996). The use of the word 'should' in its conditional form indicates that the Council could address these

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247416000528 Published online by Cambridge University Press

matters provided that there is consensus among members on the extension of its mandate (Axworthy and others 2012; Graczyk and Koivurova 2015; Molenaar 2012). This, provided there would not be any formal impediment to broadening the mandate, would also prevent the adoption of binding measures, representing a more cost-effective and faster option rather than the creation of an additional forum. Given the high degree of institutionalisation that the Council has reached at twenty years of its creation, an extension of its mandate represents, for the reasons we have already cited, a more feasible alternative to expanding NATO's regional involvement, as all relevant regional actors are represented within it. No doubt, if this should be realised, the consideration of issues of military security within the Council should be structured in a way that does not marginalise Permanent Participants, but as a means to further encourage their inclusion in issues that relates to regional stability, as in the realm of law, governance and stewardship.

Finally, even though the recent institution of an Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF 2015) represents valuable progress in terms of CSBMs and cooperation, the forum will be dedicated to operational activities in the maritime domain, and will not serve as an arena for the overall discussion of military issues (Østhagen 2015). Moreover, even in the case of enlarging its scope, it would not prevent inefficient overlap with existing fora, such as Nordic Defence Cooperation and the North America Aerospace Defence Command, thus contributing increased complexity to an already multi-layered Arctic governance structure. Instead, a broadened Arctic Council mandate may provide the creation of a comprehensive dialogue on security issues addressing hard security while continuing the work on soft- security, where the Council is already open to themes partly ascribable to a security dimension, such as search and rescue and environmental protection.

Conclusions

Despite the recognition of exceptional regional cooperation in the Arctic, this article has recognised the multi-layered character of Arctic security as a balance between high stability and an increasing military presence (Schaller 2014: 4). While this military presence may be coupled with the willingness to secure national interests and economic activities in the region, states' actions may also trigger insecurity among neighbours as they appear uncertain and are not clearly ascribable to defence or offence. For these reasons, the Arctic region may be exposed to a security dilemma that is further exacerbated by external threats, as shown by the spillover of the Ukrainian crisis into Arctic regional cooperation. This article thus asserts the need to ensure or reinforce the regional security environment through confidence- and security-building measures in order to provide resilience against possible tensions and destabilising turmoil.

The adoption of such measures could be primarily realised by an expansion of the Arctic Council's mandate, creating greater transparency among regional actors and resolving doubts about the nature of states' military intentions and presence, thus reducing further potential militarisation of the Arctic (Rosamond 2011: 65). As described by Koivurova and Graczyk (2014: 454) '[The Arctic Council] enhances stability by its very existence and by providing the 'first choice' channel for discussions on the Arctic issues within its mandate. This is further strengthened by a rather rigid calendar of meetings and activities as well as continued dialogue. The council plays a crucial role in alleviating misunderstandings both by providing the forum and services for discussion, information exchange and jointly generated knowledge.' A translation of these features in the security realm, through an expansion of the mandate of the Arctic Council, could be used as a means to further strengthen Arctic cooperation. In conclusion, the internationalisation of the Arctic should be considered as an opportunity for its institutional modernization, and the opening of a dialogue on hard policy as a way to enable the creation of a stable and comprehensive Arctic security environment to allow the region to continue to prosper in the future.

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