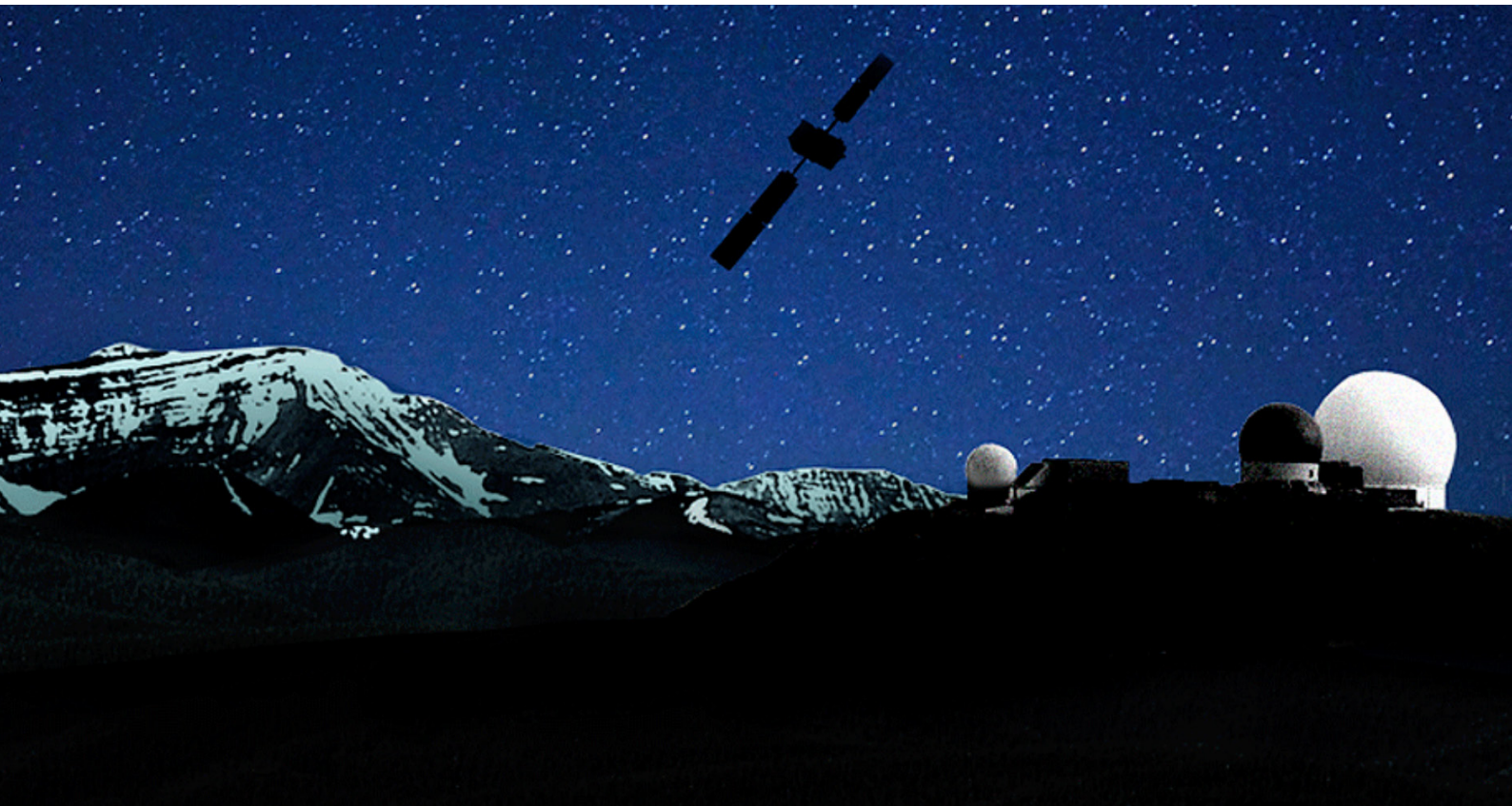


# The Arctic: A strategic hotspot

## The High North

### in a military/strategic perspective

Agneta Norberg 2014, vice chair Swedish Peace Council.



#### The Law of The Sea

The Law of the Sea is often referred to as “The Constitution of the Oceans”. This landmark convention was adopted by the United Nations in December 1982 and entered into force on 16 November 1994. It contains 320 articles and 9 annexes and governs all aspects of ocean, space and maritime issues, from navigation rights, maritime limits and marine scientific research, to resource management, marine environment protection and dispute settlement.

#### The Treaty of Svalbard

The Treaty of Svalbard was signed 1920. The §9 says: “Svalbard is a demilitarized zone and shall not be used for military means”. 50 countries have signed the Treaty of Svalbard, including all the border countries: USA, Canada, Denmark (Greenland, Faroe Islands), Iceland, Norway, Russia, USA)

#### The US ambitions

##### National Security Presidential Directive nr. 66, 2009 (US)

“The United States has broad and fundamental national security interests in the Arctic region and is prepared to operate either independently or in conjunction with other states to safeguard these interests. These interests include missile defence and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence and maritime security operations; and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight.”

##### US Geological Survey, 2009: Arctic region, an area of enormous oil and gas reserves

“The unexplored Arctic contains about one fifth of the world’s undiscovered oil and nearly one third of the natural gas. The untapped reserves are beneath the seafloor in geopolitically controversial areas above the Arctic Circle. The undiscovered gas resources are concentrated in Russian territory. The Arctic region may hold enough natural gas to meet current global demand for 14 years and most of it belongs to Russia.”

## The High North in the Cold War era

The High North is short for an area that covers the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Faroe Islands, Iceland and large parts of the Arctic and Greenland. This area had significant geostrategic importance during the Cold War era. Today, 25 years after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a new Cold War is in full gear. Again the US Military strategists consider the High North and the Arctic a strategic hotspot. The icecap is melting and a rich treasure of oil and gas will be accessible. This is one of the reasons for the US/Nato's almost permanent war manoeuvres in the northern area, the cold-war-like political rhetoric and the hostile anti-Russian media in the US and in Sweden, and all Europe.

The High North was extremely important for Pentagon during the Cold War. Anders Hellebust, journalist in Oslo, said in 1980: "The Northern territory and the Northern Sea area in particular, is one of the most dangerous regions in the world today. In a global context, the Sea surrounding northern Norway and the High North, is extremely dangerous, risking a confrontation between the two superpowers - the USA and the Soviet Union. The US Maritime Strategy means that a conflict in the Third World, in the Middle East, or in the Persian Gulf, can be transmitted to the Northern Sea area. This might bring a conflict between the two superpowers to Norway."

*This seems to be the situation today as well.*

In May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1987, Swedish Women for Peace invited Dr. Joseph Gerson, American Friends Service Committee, to Stockholm. It was in the aftermath of the turbulent discussions in Swedish mass media about possible Russian submarines in Swedish waters.

Joseph Gerson described the Reagan administrations offensive naval build up in the 80-ies in the High North and connected it with the US interventions in third world countries. He said: "US Nuclear war policy, the Maritime Strategy, and the nuclear weapons that the United States is bringing to the Nordic region are directly related to the US "dirty little wars" to defend what Noam Chomsky calls The Fifth Freedom: "The fundamental right of the United States to rob and exploit the peoples of the Third World .. and with these on-going wars in mind, and not forgetting the enormous US military build up and involvement in the Middle East, a region described by the late General Maxwell Taylor, as the "jugular vein of Western capitalism".

*This also seems to be relevant today.*

## The Cold War never ended in Washington

The tragic and dangerous fact is that the Cold War never ended in Washington, as it did in Moscow after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. And the US Navy and Air Force have not stopped the Arctic patrolling for one day. What Joseph Gerson said about the US Maritime Strategy 25 years ago, is in many aspects applicable to the situation in the High North today, namely: The objective of US submarines, US Land and Air Forces is to be able to launch a first strike towards Moscow, without risking retaliation, and to destroy the nuclear-powered submarines and the submarines in the Russian naval bases on the Kola peninsula.

## Russia totally surrounded by US/Nato bases

It is obvious that Pentagon systematically since the dissolution of the Warsaw pact has expanded Nato, country by country, to keep Russia surrounded. The US naval and military bases can block all Russian exit passages. It is obvious in the Black Sea with the US bases in Rumania, Bulgaria and Turkey. The same in the Mediterranean Sea, where the US Sixth Fleet, with numerous ships, submarines and aircraft carriers are patrolling with the capability to hinder Russia's access. Turkey became US watchdog in the Bosphorus when it entered Nato in 1952.

Russia's way to the Atlantic Ocean through the Baltic Sea will also be effectively blocked by Natobases, land- and seaforces in this area where Nato countries and Sweden frequently conduct war exercises. Numerous airfields in the Baltic States are platforms for US/Nato war plans. Supersonic planes take off and for simulated attacks against the city of St. Petersburg, from the air fields Amari in Estonia, Siauliai in Lithuania, Lilvarde in Lettland, Krzsiny in Poland and from Taszar Air Field in Hungary. In the Baltic Sea the US/Nato Marine Forces are conducting the yearly war game, BALTOP, where Sweden's and Finland's Marine Forces participate.

## A mini-Nato in the North?

Much has been done the last decade to safeguard the Arctic for the West during. One example is the British Prime Minister, David Cameron's, invitation to the Prime Ministers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to a Nordic/Baltic Summit in London, January 2011. Cameron's aim was to "consolidate an alliance of common interests". Experts insist that "...in addition to economic and energy issues, the British Prime minister will discuss a draft agreement for the foundation of a military alliance in the North." Thorvald Stoltenberg, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence in Norway is the father of Jens Stoltenberg, recently appointed General Secretary to Nato. Thorvald Stoltenberg presented a report in 2009, "Nordic Co-operation on Foreign and Security policy", calling for the creation of a military and civilian task force for "unstable regions": a joint amphibious unit; a disaster-response unit; a coastguard-maritime response force; a joint cyber defence system; joint air, maritime and satellite surveillance and additionally - cooperation in Arctic governance. The Stoltenberg recommendations later became the foundation for the meeting of the foreign ministers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden in Copenhagen in 2012, concentrated on "joint monitoring of the Nordic Marine Areas and Air Space and The Arctic."

## Vardö radar - Eyes and Ears of the USA, close to Russia

In 1998, near 10 years after the disappearance of the Warsaw Pact, the US installed a huge, efficient radar in Vardö, a few miles from the Russian border, with the ability to cover the whole Russian subcontinent. The Russian government protested against this violation of the ABM Treaty, signed in 1972, forbidding any installation that could be used in a first nuclear strike by the US or Soviet Union close to the borders of each country. The Norwegian authorities then pretended this installation aimed to track space debris.

Inge Sellevåg, journalist at the Norwegian Aftenposten, revealed that this radar, Globus II, secretly was moved to Vardö from Vandenberg Air Force base in California where it had been used in test programmes for the National Missile Defence.

Similar US radars are now installed along the Eurasian border in Poland, Romania and Turkey, aimed both at China and Russia. Fauske radar, a ground base satellite surveillance station in northern Norway, probably also belongs to this programme. The Norwegian technicians, who installed Fauske radars, were trained in California. In the year 2000 the station was modernized by NSA, US National Security Agency. This was top secret. As other open sources indicate, most installations, including those involved in navigation and intelligence gathering, are designed for war.

## Arctic, one fifth of the world's resources

In January 2009 there was a Nato seminar in Iceland: The Arctic Seminar on Security Prospects in the High North. There Natos former general secretary, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, stated: "The High North will require even more of the Alliances attention in coming years. As the icecap decreases, the possibility increases of extracting the High North's mineral wealth and energy deposits."

The USA needs allied countries surrounding the Arctic as platforms for exploiting these riches. Since 2007, Sweden, a nonaligned country, has become a platform for frequent military exercises by US/Nato forces. Nordic Air Meet is a war game, with thousands of troops over an enormous area in northern Finland, Norway and Sweden and 30 fighter planes in the air simultaneously. USA, France, Switzerland, Finland, Norway and Sweden took participated and 300 foreign military personnel. In an interview in Norrländska Socialdemokraten, NSD, John B. Kelly, head of the US Air Force in Europe, present in Luleå, expressed great satisfaction with this excellent area for military exercises

In 2009, it was time again for Loyal Arrow, Natos Rapid Response Force - the biggest in history in Norrbotten. This war game was lead from Bodö in Norway. One third of Swedish land and territorial waters were handed over to US/ Nato. The US nuclear capable fighter F-15 Eagle and F-16 took part. A British Air Craft Carrier M/S Illustrious made its way up in the Bothnian Bay and lay anchor outside of the harbour of Luleå for the first time in history. At the same time 42 warships from 12 countries were training for war at the costal town of Karlskrona, in the Baltic Operation, BALTOP, the largest so far.



## Cold Response from one to six

Then followed a series of Cold Response exercises on almost a yearly bases. Cold Response 2009 in Northern Sweden and Norway was the first of this type of winter maneuver at the northern border and in Abisko in Sweden with 9000 soldiers from 10 nations.

Russia was openly declared as the target. AWACS planes (Airborne warning and Control system), helicopters, and huge transport planes participated. British Royal Navy sent the air-craft-carrier HMS Illustrious, used in the wars in Iraq, Bosnia and Lebanon. In summer 2010, US Air Force in Europe (USAFE) trained at NEAT with 20 planes and 250 US soldiers. These exercises were seldom covered by mass media. When US Air Force was again invited to Norrbotten's exercise field Lomben their report wrote: "In the air-to-ground exercises the pilots experience is also vital, as it mirrors the type of real-world action they are seeing downrange in Afghanistan."

The Arctic Challenge in September, 2013, one of these frequent war games, included 60 planes from Norwegian F-16 Fighting Falcons, Swedish JAS-Gripen, Finnish F/A-18 Hornets and UK Eurofighters Typhoons that took to the skies with U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagles, F-15C Eagles and KC-135 Stratotankers. This was a strategic planning and a tactical war simulation for interoperability. "During the exercise, we will face almost every scenario that could be seen in any war or conflict," said U.S. Air Force Major Rich Stringer, 494<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron assistant director and lead project officer for the 48<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing's participation in the exercise. Media decided to break the silence about these yearly war games aimed at Russia, when five young Norwegians, one woman and four men, when their plane crashed into the Kebnekajse mountain, during, the military exercise, Cold Response, 2012.

## NEAT - North European Aerospace Testrange

NEAT, a huge area in Sweden, is frequently used for testing new weapons systems. Israel Aircraft was invited in 2002 to train IAI Eagle, a drone developed by Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI). This Israeli drone was monitored from Kiruna by Swedish personnel, supervised by Israeli personnel, starting and landed close to Kiruna. Israel has used it to attack Gaza in the Cast Lead war in 2008-2009. Canada and Germany have used in Afghanistan. AMRAAM (Advanced Medium-range, Air-to-Air Missiles), a GPS guided robot, used against flying targets, guided via satellites was tested in NEAT by the US, UK, Sweden and by the arms manufacturer Raytheon during 2006 and 2007. US Air Force has used these AMRAAM in attacks on Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

## US/Canada cooperation – The militarization of the Arctic

Both the USA and Canada are building up their military presence in the Arctic. On December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012, they signed the Tri-Command framework for Arctic Cooperation which will further integrate US Northern Command, Canada Joint Operation Command and North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD). This is designed to promote "Enhanced military cooperation in the Arctic and identify specific areas of Tri-Command cooperation in the preparation for and conduct of safety and security operations".

Canada has begun regular military exercises in the Arctic called Nanook Maneuvres, that include US and Danish military and the whole Nato as well. Canadian Defence Minister, Peter Mac Cay, while visiting Afghanistan, presented these Canada's "sovereignty exercises" in the Arctic Ocean, the largest to date, as response to Russias renewed territorial claims in the Arctic Ocean, sustained by the Lomonosov and the Mendeleev Ridges, claims to be adjusted in the United Nations.

## The Satellite War

The Norwegian journalist Bård Wormdal was invited to Stockholm in September 2014, by Swedish Peace Council. He explained how modern warfare more and more depends on satellites for intelligence, guiding of weapons and communication. He criticised the Norwegian authorities for violating international treaties, specifically the Svalbard Treaty of 1920, that forbids the use of Svalbard for military activities. According to him, the installing of huge US radars on Svalbard is a violation of this treaty. In addition the fiberoptic connections between Svalbard and the mainland Norway were paid partly by the Pentagon.

When the US launched war against Libya in 2011, the attacks were guided by satellite data downloaded

on Svalbard where the radar stations and those in the Antarctic have an unique ability for intelligence, weapons guiding and communication. They can, more frequent than other stations, reach the satellites that circle the poles. Very few are aware of this connection with warfare. The Svalsat radars also are decisive for the intercontinental missile defence systems. Former Sovjetunion and today's Russia has reacted sharply against the deployment of radars on Svalbard as being violations of The Svalbard Treaty. Sweden has an almost identical ground station for satellites, namely Esrange.

### Esrange the most active downloading station

The Esrange Space Center, situated a couple of miles outside the northern City of Kiruna, within NEAT - North European Aerospace Testrange - large as Belgium is the largest overland test range in Western Europe. Esrange is the world's most active satellite ground station. There the Swedish Space Corporation monitors 24 satellites circling around the globe. Esrange cooperates with Vandenberg Air Force Base in California and with Nasa (US) to conduct stratospheric balloon flights from northern Sweden to Alaska, with scientific payloads such as AESOP (Anti Electron-Sub-Orbital Payloads) and TRACER (Transition Radiation Array for Cosmic Energetic Radiation) which are financed by Nasa (US).

### Andöya Rocket Range - an Arctic Cape Canaveral

According to Andöya website the Andöya Rocket Range "is the world's northernmost rocket launch facility". The nearest competitors are Sweden's Esrange and Alaska Poker Flat "for studying of physical phenomena in the polar atmosphere, the Aurora Borealis, or northern lights, Andöya is second to none."

### US Thule Base in Greenland.

Greenland is an independent island but the former colonizer Denmark controls its foreign policy. US have been allowed to install The Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) radars on Thule Air Base in the North West of Greenland. During the Cold War the US deployed nuclear weapons on the Thule base. Today its radars are key elements in US defence strategy and an essential part of the US Missile Defence architecture around the globe. Other important radars connected to this strategy are Fylingdales radars in UK and Clear radars in Alaska. The Inuits (Indigenous People on Greenland), fought fiercely against the upgrading of the radar, and Russia claims that this installation threatens Russian Security.

### US nuclear Trident submarines

The Federation of American Scientists (FAS) has published information indicating that 14 US Ohio class submarines conducted 31 deterrent patrols in 2008 lasting longer than during the years of the US-USSR



military standoff – the Cold War. Routinely these US nuclear submarines fleet conducts far more patrols than the Russian (2008, three times more). A couple of Tridents are patrolling in the Arctic. The twelve operational US nuclear subs have over 1.100 nuclear warheads.

A new phenomenon has appeared recently in the area: four US SSBN (ballistic missile subs) “Ohio”-class submarines have been converted into SSGN (ballistic satellite guided cruise missiles) submarines equipped with 154 sea-based cruise missiles each. They frequently appear in the North Seas and can deliver a first strike against Russia. US has several times refused to reach an accord with Russia on banning the patrol of the nuclear-powered submarines near the shores of the Russian Federation and US on reciprocal basis. They are very dangerous - there has been 12 underwater collisions between Russian-Soviet and US nuclear-powered submarines in the Barents Sea, fortunately this far without a nuclear explosion.

**Conclusion – extremely dangerous for the survival of our planet**

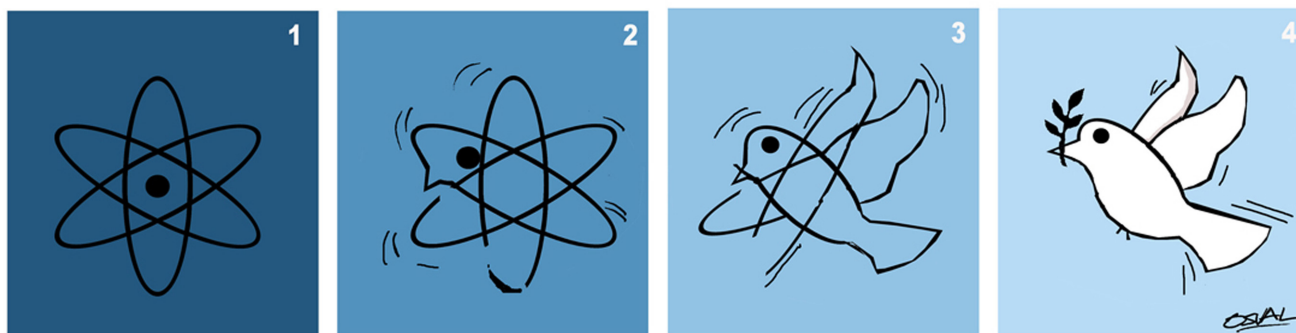
All this is extremely dangerous. The militarisation of the Arctic, the advancing of US/Nato forces and bases closer and closer to Russia, creates a dangerous tension and war risk, but also a mortal danger to nature and climate. US/Nato have now settled down in every Nordic Country and are surrounding the entire globe. Experience shows that a country that accepts to host a US military base in its territory also has to accept US meddling and dictating its foreign policy. This must be brought to the public in every country, and discussed widely, and profoundly. Informed of the dangers and shown peaceful, sustainable alternatives, surely the public will react and demand:

**Demilitarisation of the Arctic region!**

**Stop Nato expansion!**

**Stop oil and gas prospecting in the Arctic!**

**Save energy and build on renewable energy sources!**



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