Peer-Reviewed Article

From cooperation to containment: Reactions in the Nordic states to Russia's and the United States' Arctic assertiveness

Elena Kravchik, Doctoral Researcher, Doctoral Programme in Political, Societal and Regional Changes, Faculty of Arts, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Rinna Kullaa, Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, Tampere University, Tampere, Finland

Abstract

This article comparatively examines how Norway, Finland, and Denmark have reacted through their Arctic engagement to Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine and the collapse of the 'Arctic exceptionalism' paradigm. We trace how Nordic states came to consider Russia as an existential threat, necessitating extraordinary measures ranging from Finland's NATO accession to Denmark's abandonment of its EU defence opt-out and Norway's reinforcement of its northern brigades. There is a cascading pattern from domestic securitisation to interstate Nordic cooperation and interregional anchoring in NATO and the EU, as well as global-in-the-region positioning. While convergence on containment is evident, divergences persist in geographical emphases, institutional alignments, domestic patterns and histories. Norway has focused on maritime approaches, Finland on its eastern land border, and Denmark on Atlantic extension via Greenland and the GIUK gap. Nordic securitisation is contributing to the reshaping of Atlantic and Arctic security and the NATO-anchored sub-complex, where unity coexists with nationalised geographies of risk. The future of Arctic security will not be determined by Washington and Moscow alone but will hinge on Nordic agency, especially Norway's dynamic role. Decisions in Helsinki and Copenhagen also now bind regional security dynamics to global rivalries.

Keywords

the Arctic Ocean, Nordic security, sea area foreign policy, Denmark, Russia

CC BY NC ND

Introduction

The idea of the Arctic as a zone insulated from the majority of global geopolitical rivalries was institutionalised at the end of the Cold War through a dense web of cooperative arrangements which began to emerge through environmentalism and climate related cooperation in the late 1970s. The cooperative logic that emerged first in the Baltic Sea area extended to environmental protection and scientific collaboration in the Arctic from the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (1991) to the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation (2017). Together with the creation of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (Kirkenes Declaration, 1993) and the Arctic Council (Ottawa Declaration, 1996), which explicitly excluded military security from their mandates, embodied the idea of 'Arctic exceptionalism.' The argument was that the High North could remain a domain of stability even amid broader geopolitical tensions. As late as 2008, the Ilulissat Declaration reaffirmed commitments of five coastal states — Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States — to settle overlapping claims under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) rather than through confrontation. The 2010 Barents Sea Treaty between Norway and Russia became a landmark of pragmatic boundary-making. Across the Arctic Ocean collaborative structures grew strong through their institutionalisation.

Concurrently, by the end of the 2000's decade, the Arctic political landscape also came to contain latent security undercurrents despite the dominant narrative of cooperation. In the mid-2000s, heightened expectations regarding Arctic resource extraction, emerging accessibility of Arctic shipping routes, and competing continental shelf claims under UNCLOS contributed to the politicisation of sovereignty. These dynamics were accompanied by increasingly assertive security discourses, most visibly articulated in President Vladimir Putin's Munich speech in 2007 and symbolically reinforced by Russia's Arktika-2007 expedition and the planting of the Russian flag at the North Pole. While these developments did not dismantle the cooperative framework of Arctic governance, they generated early securitising signals and reactions among Arctic states, foreshadowing tensions that would later intensify.

The cooperative framework began to erode more visibly after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 while institutions such as the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council formally continued their work. Growing political mistrust manifested itself through a series of symbolic and practical adjustments, including US and EU economic sanctions against Russia, the suspension of NATO military-to-military contacts, and temporary pauses in joint search-and-rescue exercises. As Alexander Sergunin (2020) notes, this period marked a shift from routine cooperation toward a more cautious and politicised Arctic interaction.

Political representation at the 2015 Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Iqaluit was downgraded and Russia was represented by the Minister of Natural Resources Sergei Donskoi rather than the Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Frameworks such as Finland's Northern Dimension policy, originally established to link the EU, Russia, Norway, and Iceland, continued to function through four partnerships on health, transport, culture, and the environment. Finland also sought to expand Arctic cooperation beyond Europe. Already in its 2013 Arctic Strategy, the government called for intensified collaboration with the United States and Canada to enhance capabilities to operate under Arctic conditions and to secure rapid response in emergencies, noting that "Finnish Arctic navigation skills have also been utilised in North America, particularly in icebreaking" (Government of Finland, 2013, p. 30). During the second half of the 2010s, these partnerships became more strategic, such as Finland´s orientation towards the United States and Canada. They were increasingly more implementation-orientation, focusing on

CC BY NC ND

technical cooperation and infrastructures rather than new politically ambitious projects.

The fact that the United States began to distance itself from earlier multilateral Arctic governance had a significant impact. In his first term (2017-2021) President Donald Trump´s White House began to frame the Arctic as an arena of great-power competition. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's Rovaniemi address at Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in May 2019 explicitly described the region as "an arena for power and competition" (Arctic Council, 2019). No joint ministerial declaration was adopted at the meeting due to US opposition against references to climate change, marking the first time the Council failed to produce a consensus declaration (Polar Connection, 2019). Instead, the ministers signed a joint ministerial statement, a document of less significance, intended to preserve a lesser degree of unity among the eight Arctic states. These developments exposed the fragility of Arctic institutions that had previously been portrayed as a safe haven from geopolitical tensions.

Ruptures deepened after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 to include institutions. In March that year, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the United States suspended participation in Arctic Council meetings involving Russia, and in September 2023 Moscow formally withdrew from the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. In June 2024, Finland announced its decision to withdraw from the BEAC effectively in 2025 (Government of Finland, 2024b). Meanwhile, Donald Trump's second term as President (2025-2029) has compounded geopolitical uncertainty, reflected in renewed threats to "take control" of Greenland (CSIS, 2025) and further wavering commitments to NATO (Raik, Terlikowski and Baumann, 2025).

In the more than four years of Russia's major war of aggression against Ukraine, political-level cooperation within the Arctic Council has remained suspended, while limited project-level work within select working groups has gradually resumed. This work has primarily taken place in virtual formats and has been conducted on the basis of pre-2022 mandates, with Russia's participation remaining constrained and no new initiatives launched. As Koivurova and Shibata (2023) observe, while political dialogue with Russia has "stopped completely," functional cooperation grounded in law, including fisheries management, frontier-waters arrangements, and global maritime regimes, has continued during the war. What has emerged is a technocratic core stripped of multilateral ambition: a new form of cooperation reduced to legally mandated routines and narrowly circumscribed technical coordination.

The period of Russia´s mass scale invasion of Ukraine affecting most immediately the Black Sea area also exposed the limits of Arctic exceptionalism. Institutions once celebrated as models of pragmatic coexistence have fragmented and found practical functional routines to sustain minimal contact with Russia. At the same time, the Arctic countries that are part of NATO struggle with the prerogatives from the Trump 2025 White House which has refused to rule out military means of invading Greenland (Council on Foreign Relations, 2026). An Inter-Nato conflict would be deadly for the alliance. The Arctic's post–Cold War order has thus not collapsed outright but hardened into a minimalist, law-bound coexistence: stable enough to function, yet emptied of its political meaning while in complete flux.

In this rapidly evolving context, the strategic responses of the Nordic states become critically important both in the context of the Arctic Ocean as well as the interconnected Baltic Sea. Yet, they remain understudied. The erosion of Arctic exceptionalism sets the stage for a new configuration of security in which the Nordic states are both Baltic and Arctic emerge as central to the structure of international relations across sea areas. Denmark is a bottleneck state of the Baltic entry to the Atlantic, and Finland NATO´s and EU´s outer extensive land border with Baltic and Arctic Russia. Existing scholarship on Arctic governance and securitisation has either focused on great-power dynamics, especially US–Russia confrontation, or on environmental and Indigenous issues. Extensive analysis of how Norway, Finland, and Denmark redefined their Arctic security strategies after 2022 is missing and relevant questions

Kravchik and Kullaa (2025) From cooperation to containment: Reactions in the Nordic states to Russia's and the United States' Arctic assertiveness. *Nordic Review of International Studies* 5, 50–68.

CC BY NC ND

which Nordic states can help to reveal include: did changes across the Arctic reflect lines drawn already in 2013 or 2014, or before in the early 2000s? And in which order did the security of the Arctic region actually change?

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has prompted Norway, Finland, and Denmark to reframe their Arctic engagement, shifting from cooperative governance toward deterrence and containment. This shift has produced not merely alignment with NATO policy, but a distinct Nordic pattern of Arctic securitisation, in which national strategies function as a collective structuring force within the regional security architecture. While all three states converge in their securitised approach toward Russia, they remain differentiated by geography: Norway prioritises maritime approaches and the Barents Sea, Finland the land border and Arctic military capabilities, and Denmark the Atlantic dimension through Greenland and the Greenland – Iceland – United Kingdom (GIUK) gap. This pattern can be analysed as a Nordic sub-complex, defined as a cluster of states whose security interdependence is stronger internally than externally (Buzan and Wæver, 2003), operating within the broader Arctic Regional Security Complex.

Data and method

This analysis builds on a qualitative corpus of Arctic and security policy documents, white papers, long-term defence plans and official speeches issued between 2022 and 2025, reaching back to 2013 as background. The timeframe begins with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which further triggered the suspension of Arctic cooperation with Moscow, and extends to 2025 in order to capture the consequences of Finland's and Sweden's NATO accessions as well as the return of Donald Trump to the US presidency.

The study focuses on Norway, Finland, and Denmark[1] as three Nordic states whose Arctic security strategies are shaped by distinct geographical exposures to Russia. For Norway, the Barents Sea constitutes the primary arena of risk, combining maritime approaches, offshore resources, and fisheries with long-standing patterns of military monitoring and deterrence. Finland's security perspective is anchored in its extensive land border with Russia, which, after 2022, became fully embedded within NATO's northern deterrence posture and reframed as a frontline of European security. Denmark's Arctic relevance derives less from proximity to Russia than from its Atlantic position through Greenland and the Faroe Islands, linking Arctic security to transatlantic sea lines of communication and the GIUK gap. These differentiated spatial orientations generate distinct national priorities within a shared Nordic securitisation of Russia, illustrating how geographical location structures threat perception and strategic focus within the Nordic sub-complex.

Analytically, Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) and securitisation theory are utilised to interpret Nordic responses to the post-2022 Arctic transformation. RSCT situates the Nordic states as a sub-complex within the wider Arctic security complex, while securitisation theory explains how Russia has been framed as an existential threat, thereby legitimising extraordinary policy measures (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998). Together, these frameworks link national adjustments to broader regional and systemic dynamics. The analysis does not seek to offer a comprehensive mapping of Arctic security

1 Iceland and Sweden were excluded from this analysis for reasons of analytical focus. Iceland, though a NATO member, occupies a peripheral geographic and strategic position with limited direct involvement in Arctic security vis-à-vis Russia. Sweden, lacking an Arctic coastline and direct territorial proximity to Russia, presents analytical redundancy: its recent NATO accession largely mirrors Finland's trajectory. By contrast, Norway's non-EU status, Finland's transformative strategic shift, and Denmark's geostrategic maritime role offer distinct and complementary perspectives on evolving Arctic security dynamics.

CC BY NC ND

or an exhaustive test of theory. Instead, it identifies the Nordic sub-complex as a distinct arena within the Arctic security architecture and demonstrates how securitisation by small states has become a structuring mechanism in its own right.

Theoretical implications for the Arctic

Recent developments have brought Arctic security dynamics closer to what Regional Security Complex Theory defines as an RSC: "a set of states whose security perceptions and practices are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another" (Buzan and Wæver, 2003, p. 44). During the Cold War, the region was subject to overlay, meaning that superpower rivalry absorbed the Arctic into the global East–West confrontation, leaving little space for autonomous regional dynamics. After 1991, however, cooperative frameworks emerged that deliberately excluded hard security. The Rovaniemi Process (1991) initiated environmental cooperation, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (1993) institutionalised cross-border governance with Russia, and the Arctic Council (1996) became the central forum for sustainable development, environmental protection, and Indigenous rights.

The 2008 Ilulissat Declaration further consolidated this cooperative order. It reaffirmed the application of the Law of the Sea to the Arctic Ocean, stating that there is "… no need to develop a new comprehensive international legal regime to govern the Arctic Ocean" (Ilulissat Declaration, 2008, para. 4). In doing so, the five coastal states asserted that existing international law, as embodied in UNCLOS and customary practice, sufficed for managing disputes and governance in the High North, and implicitly discouraged proposals for a new Antarctic-style treaty (Winkelmann, 2008).

Northern governments reinforced this de-securitised framing: Denmark's 2011 strategy described the Arctic as "a peaceful area based on international law" (Government of Denmark, 2011, p. 10), Finland's 2013 strategy portrayed it as insulated from global conflict (Government of Finland, 2013, p. 14), and Norway's 2009 white paper stressed cooperation over confrontation (Government of Norway, 2009, p. 37). Occasional disputes, such as the 2010 Norway–Russia maritime delimitation treaty in the Barents Sea or the 1988 US–Canada Arctic Cooperation Agreement, were resolved through legal and bilateral mechanisms.

By the early 2010s, the Arctic resembled what RSCT would term a proto-complex: regional dynamics existed, yet they were defined more by cooperation than by securitisation. A broad strand of scholarship argued that, prior to 2022, the Arctic did not fulfil the criteria of a Regional Security Complex. Among them, Østhagen (2021) offered the most systematic critique. He argued that Arctic security concerns were too unevenly distributed to sustain a coherent complex: for Norway, Russia's militarisation represented an immediate threat, while for the United States and Canada, the region remained peripheral. Moreover, he maintained that Arctic dynamics were largely driven by global rivalries, between NATO and Russia, and increasingly the United States and China, rather than by regional interdependence. With institutions such as the Arctic Council excluding hard security, Østhagen concluded that the Arctic should be understood not as a single RSC, but as a set of subregional logics nested within global power structures. Fakhoury (2023) went further, suggesting that the problem lay in RSCT itself: its state-centric and proximity-based assumptions could not capture the Arctic's diffuse, multi-scalar dynamics. He proposed instead a "security constellation" encompassing non-state actors, environmental vulnerabilities, and external great-power interests. While these concerns and foci have not gone anywhere and remain even more central today, together these critiques reinforced the view that, prior to 2022, the Arctic did not fulfil the criteria of a Regional Security Complex.

Kravchik and Kullaa (2025) From cooperation to containment: Reactions in the Nordic states to Russia's and the United States' Arctic assertiveness. *Nordic Review of International Studies 5*, 50–68.

CC BY NC ND

The post-2022 environment reshaped the Arctic's security architecture in ways that closely reflect RSCT's criteria for regionalisation. Russia's War of Aggression against Ukraine produced a visible '7-versus-1' boundary within the Arctic Council and accelerated the consolidation of the Nordic-Western cluster. Of the Nordic states, Finland and Norway, like Ukraine, shared borders with aggressive Russia. Finland's NATO accession in 2023 and Sweden's in 2024 created a contiguous allied northern flank, embedding the Nordic region firmly within the Euro-Atlantic security complex. Within this framework, defence cooperation under NORDEFCO deepened through joint air surveillance, recurring large-scale exercises, and harmonised operational planning. Exercises such as Nordic Response 2024, mobilising 20,000 troops across northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and Steadfast Defender 2024, NATO's largest post-Cold War drill, exemplified the growing density of integrated operations.

On the opposite side, Russia reinforced dual-use infrastructure and framed NATO's Arctic presence as a strategic threat in its military doctrines, thereby contributing to mutual securitisation. At the same time, the institutional web of Arctic security cooperation expanded beyond the Nordic core. The Arctic Security Forces Roundtable continues to convene senior military leaders for coordination and information-sharing, while NORDEFCO has strengthened its role as a regional framework binding Nordic defence policies. Canada's gradual move toward deeper NATO engagement, alongside the creation of the NATO Centre of Excellence for Climate Change and Security in Montreal, further adds to the institutional depth of the emerging Arctic Regional Security Complex (Bykova, 2024).

Taken together, these transformations satisfy the core variables of RSCT: clear boundaries, polarity, interdependence, and anarchic structure. As Sadurski (2024) argues, the Arctic now constitutes a Regional Security Complex, structured around two interacting sub-complexes: a Nordic cluster (Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, and Denmark as a metropolitan state) and a North American cluster (the United States, Canada, and Denmark via Greenland), with Russia simultaneously internal to the region and functioning as a structural threat. In RSCT typology, this corresponds to a Great Power RSC, defined by the direct presence of global powers: the United States as a superpower and Russia as a great power with supra-regional reach, alongside regional powers whose geographical proximity and institutional integration give them disproportionate influence.

Within this structural setting, the Nordic states have operationalised securitisation in concrete policy choices and official discourse. Finland framed the eastern border as the frontline of European security and described the surge of instrumentalised migration in 2023–2024 as a hybrid attack, justifying the construction of barriers and the full suspension of border crossings with Russia as emergency security measures. Norway's High North Strategy 2025 declared Russia's war "the most serious security situation since the Second World War," legitimising increased troop presence in Finnmark and expanded resilience measures for northern municipalities; the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines became part of a broader discourse linking critical offshore infrastructure to perceived Russian-related security risks. In Denmark, securitising discourse similarly linked airspace violations, drone incursions, and hybrid interference to Russian provocations. Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen described the 2025 drone attacks that closed Copenhagen Airport as "the most serious assault on Danish critical infrastructure to date" (Ritzaus Bureau, 2025), reinforcing a perception of Russia as a systemic threat. In Greenland, Chinese investment bids in airports and rare-earth mining (2018–2021) were blocked after Danish and Greenlandic leaders framed them as threats to sovereignty and security, showing how economic dependencies were recast as existential risks. The 2023–2030 Danish Defence Agreement continued this logic by defining offshore wind farms and subsea infrastructure as critical security assets, mandating enhanced maritime surveillance.

Across these cases, Russia is consistently considered as the existential adversary, while hybrid

CC BY NC ND

disruptions and economic vulnerabilities are securitised alongside military threats, reinforcing Nordic alignment with NATO and deepening intra-Nordic cooperation, which operates within the wider Arctic RSC. Together, these processes reveal a dual transformation: at the discursive level, securitisation has expanded beyond the military sector to encompass hybrid and economic domains; at the structural level, these national moves have consolidated the Nordic sub-complex as a coherent regional actor within the Arctic security architecture.

In the post-2022 environment, it is analytically productive to treat the Arctic as a Great Power Regional Security Complex, within which the Nordic states function as regional powers shaping the trajectory of the High North. By embedding their policies in a Nordic sub-complex, we can analyse them not as isolated national adjustments but as mutually embedded responses to systemic shocks. This theoretical framework can guide empirical analysis, focusing on four questions: (i) how the Nordic states justified the suspension of cooperation with Russia within Arctic governance frameworks; (ii) which policy instruments and securitising moves implemented this transformation; (iii) how Arctic concerns became integrated into wider Euro-Atlantic strategies; and (iv) what benefits and stresses emerged within Nordic cooperation. In this sense, the Nordics emerge not as peripheral small states but as pivotal actors whose choices actively reshape the Arctic security order.

Four levels of RSCT

Our analysis follows the four levels of Regional Security Complex Theory (Buzan and Wæver, 2003): domestic, interstate, interregional, and global-in-the-region. This framework traces how Nordic securitisation evolved within national settings, deepened through regional cooperation, and became embedded in European and transatlantic security structures, linking the Nordic sub-complex to broader great-power dynamics.

Domestic level

Norway

Norway's domestic securitisation of the Arctic after 2022 represents a decisive rupture in its long-standing balance of deterrence and reassurance from the prerogative of Oslo´s own goals. Norway in the High North 2025 and the National Security Strategy 2025 both describe Russia's war in Ukraine as "the most serious security situation since the Second World War," identifying Russia as Norway's principal threat and legitimising a near-total freeze of cross-border cooperation, leaving only fisheries management, border control, and search-and-rescue as narrowly defined "core interests" (Government of Norway, 2025b, pp. 4–6, 15).

The securitisation of the Arctic is materialised in a historic defence build-up. The Long-Term Defence Plan 2025–2036 and Norway in the High North 2025 strategy together project a doubling of defence spending, expanded brigades in Finnmark, a strengthened Home Guard of 45,000 personnel, and large-scale investments in northern infrastructure, reframing Finnmark as a national readiness zone within a whole-of-society "total defence," where municipal preparedness, civilian logistics, and resilience planning are securitized alongside military capabilities (Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 2024; Government of Norway, 2025b, pp. 22–23).

This approach reflects a long-standing Norwegian doctrine that sovereignty in the High North must be demonstrated through continuous presence, maintaining communities, infrastructure, and state activity in the region (Government of Norway, 2025b, p. 7). Accordingly, the National Security Strategy 2025

CC BY NC ND

stresses that sustaining settlement, services, and state presence in Svalbard and eastern Finnmark is vital for safeguarding Norwegian sovereignty and national security. While this principle of 'sovereignty through presence' is not new, its post-2022 articulation has become more pronounced within an explicitly security-oriented logic: population and infrastructure are now framed as instruments of deterrence rather than merely regional policy goals. Demography and local economies thus acquire a security function, serving as tangible expressions of jurisdiction and national resilience.

Recent assessments extend this doctrine from territorial control to the protection of critical infrastructure. The Norwegian Intelligence Service's Focus 2025 report warns that Russia's confrontation with the West includes possible sabotage operations against European energy and communication infrastructure, "which could also impact Norway" (Norwegian Intelligence Service, 2025). Similar concerns are echoed in the PST National Threat Assessment 2025 and the NSM Risk Report 2025, which highlight subsea cables and offshore installations as potential targets of hybrid operations. A series of incidents have reinforced these warnings: in 2022, a subsea cable connecting Svalbard to mainland Norway was deliberately damaged; in 2024, a communications line near Evenes Air Station was severed in an act investigated as possible sabotage; and in 2025, a cyber-intrusion at a dam in Bremanger temporarily disrupted water control systems (Norwegian Police Security Service, 2025; Norwegian National Security Authority, 2025). Together, these events revealed how hybrid threats can exploit the Arctic's sparse infrastructure. In response, Norway intensified surveillance and civil–military coordination across the north, linking energy, communication, and territorial security within a single deterrence framework.

At the land frontier, the Ranger Battalion GSV conducts continuous surveillance and patrols along the 196-kilometre border with Russia, embodying Norway's "presence equals sovereignty" principle (Government of Norway, 2025b). This territorial and infrastructural securitisation is complemented by a societal dimension. The document connects northern population retention to national resilience, highlighting fisheries, renewable energy, and local food production as pillars of sustainable security. Through this combined logic of presence, protection, and resilience, everyday life in Finnmark and Svalbard becomes part of Norway's security architecture: demography, energy, and infrastructure are integrated into a unified system of sovereignty and deterrence.

Finland

At the domestic level, Finland's security policy, which has shaped its Arctic orientation, has undergone a profound securitising shift since 2022, transforming a framework of cooperation into one of deterrence and territorial defence. The 2021Arctic Policy Strategy had portrayed Finland as a "world leader in Arctic ship technology and ship operations," emphasising environmental protection, Indigenous rights, and stability as foundations of its northern engagement (Government of Finland, 2021, pp. 32, 54). Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine upended this logic. The 2024 Government Report Policy declared instead that Finland's security now rests on three locks: national defence within NATO, EU membership, and bilateral cooperation with key allies. This formulation marked the end of the integration of the Arctic into Finland's Euro-Atlantic defence architecture. The Arctic and Baltic were recast as a single strategic continuum "inseparable from Euro-Atlantic defence" (Government of Finland, 2024a, p. 8, p. 37).

This reframing redefined Finland's northern identity and territorial logic. The political discourse of wide choices once stated by President Niinistö's remark that "sitting on the fence… [was] quite a good place to be" (2013, cited in Forsberg, 2017, p. 11), now exists only in its remnants as deterrence became more central to national self-understanding. Materially, this transformation was institutionalised at the eastern border and in northern infrastructure. Following Russia's use of instrumentalised migration in 2023–2024 (also used before during the 2015 refugee crises), Finland closed all border crossings and began constructing a 200-kilometre border fence, while also withdrawing from the 1997 Ottawa Treaty

CC BY NC ND

to restore its right to deploy anti-personnel mines. These steps embedded the discourse of existential threat into law and infrastructure, turning the eastern frontier from a site of regulated coexistence into a securitised barrier framed as essential for border preparedness and the security of both Finland and the EU (European Commission, 2024).

In the High North, securitisation has been imagined to be consolidated through NATO's physical presence. In June 2025, seven Allied governments, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, France, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, announced the establishment of NATO's Forward Land Forces, as part of the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture on the Northern Flank (Government of Iceland, 2025). Located in Rovaniemi and Sodankylä, the formation enables rapid reinforcement and integrated operations among Nordic and Allied units, with Finland as host. As the Norwegian Ministry of Defence noted, this enhanced forward presence, the first of its kind in the Nordic region, strengthens NATO's deterrence against Russia and deepens Nordic military integration (High North News, 2025). It thus anchors Allied defence spatially within Lapland, turning geography itself into a strategic asset and institutionalising deterrence within Finland's northern territory.

The Finnish Military Intelligence Review 2025 assesses that Russia is actively conducting intelligence activities in Finland, with particular interest in the activities of foreign forces, developments in defence cooperation, and NATO commands and force structures. It also judges that the threat of sabotage, including against military targets, critical national infrastructure and security of supply, has increased in Finland (Finnish Defence Forces, 2025, pp. 16–17).

Despite Finland's long-standing Arctic engagement, institutional adaptation has lagged behind these strategic realities. The government led by Petteri Orpo (2023-) has neither established a parliamentary committee on Arctic Affairs nor produced a new Arctic strategy beyond the 2021 document (valid until 2030 but greatly altered among other events by Finland joining Nato). This inertia contrasts sharply with the region's growing strategic salience. Rovaniemi lies roughly 415 km by air from Murmansk, close to the bases of Russia's Northern Fleet (headquartered in Severomorsk, Murmansk Oblast), a proximity that underscores Finland's exposure to Arctic security dynamics. Domestically, the National Coalition Party (Kokoomus) dominates Finland's foreign and security policymaking: Prime Minister Petteri Orpo, Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen, and Defence Minister Antti Häkkänen all represent Kokoomus, as do European Commissioner Henna Virkkunen and President Alexander Stubb. Thus, Arctic policy discussions have remained largely embedded in Finland's broader Euro-Atlantic security agenda, with limited signs of institutional renewal since 2021.

In contrast, other Arctic partners have modernised their strategic frameworks following Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, notably the United States' National Strategy for the Arctic Region (2022) and the Department of Defense's Arctic Strategy (2024); Denmark's Foreign and Security Policy Strategies (2022, 2023) and its current chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2025–2027); Norway's High North / Arctic Policy (2025); and Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy (2024).

Taken together, Finland's post-2022 trajectory reveals a paradox: while the country has securitised the Arctic in practice through border control, northern infrastructure, and NATO integration, it has not translated this shift into updated strategic frameworks. The result is a gap between Finland's operational deterrence posture and its formal Arctic policymaking, distinguishing it from its Nordic and North American peers.

Denmark (the Realm)

Denmark's Arctic securitisation is defined by the interplay between Copenhagen and the autonomous governments of Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic

Kravchik and Kullaa (2025) From cooperation to containment: Reactions in the Nordic states to Russia's and the United States' Arctic assertiveness. *Nordic Review of International Studies* 5, 50–68.

CC BY NC ND

2011–2020 established the baseline: sovereignty enforcement through visible military presence, via the Joint Arctic Command and Arctic Response Force, combined with multilateral engagement for legitimacy. The Security and Defence Policy Report 2022 reframe this balance, identifying the Arctic and North Atlantic as arenas of "intensified great-power competition" and calling for stronger surveillance and allied coordination (Government of Denmark, 2022). Reflecting this reorientation, Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen declared that "first comes the Arctic and the Kingdom of Denmark, then the Baltic Sea and Denmark's immediate areas" (High North News, 2023), signalling a strategic reprioritisation toward the High North.

Greenland's Foreign, Security and Defense Strategy 2024–2033 advanced a co-securitising approach: reaffirming the Arctic as a "region of low tension" while assuming greater sovereignty responsibilities through fisheries control, surveillance, and gradual coast guard development (Government of Greenland, 2024, pp. 41–45). Within the Kingdom framework, it insists that all security measures embed Greenlandic participation and civilian resilience. This principle was institutionalised in Denmark's Arctic and North Atlantic Defence Agreement 2025, a USD 2 billion package funding three Arctic naval vessels, two long-range drones, satellite surveillance, and the upgrade of the Joint Arctic Command in Nuuk, while linking defence investments to local employment and training (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2025). Greenland's representation in NATO through Denmark's Permanent Mission and its aspiration to join the NATO Parliamentary Assembly indicate growing integration into the Euro-Atlantic Regional Security Complex. Yet it simultaneously maintains a peace-centred identity and a low-tension policy, illustrating alignment without subordination.

Since 2024, Denmark has embodied its 'sovereignty through presence' doctrine through Exercise Arctic Light, its largest Arctic manoeuvre to date, held in Greenland's southwestern fjords. Deployments of frigates, F-35s, and special operations units demonstrated both readiness and autonomy, with participation limited to European allies and the deliberate exclusion of US forces. Although Danish commanders emphasise that Greenland faces no direct military threat, defence planning follows NATO's deterrence logic, prioritising readiness over invasion scenarios (Joint Arctic Command, 2025). Yet, limited naval capacity, the ageing THETIS-class vessels, and reliance on US support via Pituffik Air Base continue to constrain Denmark's autonomy (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2022, 2025). This dependency fuels recurring sovereignty anxiety, most visibly reignited by Donald Trump's 2025 claim that "the ownership and control of Greenland is an absolute necessity." (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024)

To mitigate dependency, Denmark has sought greater European alignment and Nordic solidarity among the Nordic states. The 2025 decision to procure over USD 9 billion in European-made air-defence systems instead of US Patriots symbolised a move toward strategic independence (Breaking Defense, 2025). Parallel resilience-building measures reflect the same logic: following drone incursions in 2025, Copenhagen imposed airspace restrictions, while the Defence Intelligence Service warned of "a high risk of sabotage" against critical infrastructure (Defence Intelligence Service, 2025). New unmanned maritime systems, including saildrones, were deployed to monitor subsea cables and enhance Arctic situational awareness.

Interstate level

At the interstate level, cooperation among Finland, Sweden, and Norway has undergone a marked transformation since 2022. What was once ad hoc coordination has evolved into structured interoperability anchored in NORDEFCO, which now functions as somewhat of a backbone of Nordic defence cooperation. Under the Vision for Nordic Defence Cooperation (2023), the Nordic states

CC BY NC ND

committed to common operations planning, enhanced situational awareness and air surveillance, joint logistics and military mobility across borders, and total defence coordination linking civilian and military preparedness. These mechanisms have institutionalised shared standards for air and land operations, cold-weather training, and cross-border reinforcement, effectively aligning Nordic capabilities with NATO's collective defence structures (NORDEFCO, 2023; Government of Norway, 2025a).

Cooperation is reinforced through recurring exercises such as Arctic Challenge and Nordic Response, which creates routines. The emerging plan to merge national air fleets into a combined force of about 250 combat aircraft under a joint concept of operations reflects this shift toward collective deterrence. Bilateral and trilateral frameworks deepen this trend: Finland and Sweden expanded operative cooperation even before their 2023 NATO accession, while the 2024 Norway–Finland defence agreement codified twenty domains of enhanced cooperation focused on rapid cross-border mobility and reinforcement. Similarly, the 2025 Denmark–Finland agreement on joint operations extended this logic to the western flank of the sub-complex. The same integrative dynamic extends to mobility and infrastructure, where joint corridor and transport initiatives are aligning national systems with NATO standards.

Complementing military integration, the Nordic states have begun to securitise infrastructure as part of total defence. A joint infrastructure strategy aims to modernise ports, roads, and railways in line with NATO standards to sustain allied reinforcement and close logistical gaps. Building on the June 2024 agreement to establish a military transport corridor across northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland, it enables the rapid movement of troops and equipment through coordinated civil–military planning (Government of Norway, 2024). The corridor institutionalises NATO's west–east logistics line across the High North, turning civilian routes into strategic assets. In May 2025, the Nordic transport ministers issued a joint statement linking transport policy directly to total-defence planning, emphasising cooperation between defence and civilian sectors and the integration of preparedness and resilience into infrastructure governance (Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications, 2025).

Still, Nordic defence integration remains uneven. Norway entered this framework from a long-standing NATO position, equipped with mature infrastructure, host-nation procedures, and integrated command structures. Finland and Sweden, by contrast, have undergone accelerated adaptation since 2023, aligning legislation, interoperability standards, and logistics within a compressed timeframe. Persistent infrastructure gaps between northern Norway and Finnish Lapland, legal constraints on cross-border troop movements, and divergent procurement regimes continue to limit full interoperability.

Concurrently, the cooperative layer of Arctic governance has eroded. In March 2022, seven Arctic states suspended participation in the Arctic Council following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, exposing the fragility of soft-law mechanisms lacking suspension or enforcement provisions (Koivurova and Shibata, 2023). Although limited technical work resumed under Norway's chairship in 2023, political cooperation remains largely frozen. Yet treaty-based regimes endure. Binding agreements on search and rescue (2011), oil-spill preparedness (2013), and scientific cooperation (2017) still function among all eight Arctic states. Likewise, selective bilateral arrangements, such as Norway's annual Barents Sea fisheries quotas and Finland's 1964 Frontier Watercourses and 1959 Lake Inari agreements, maintain channels of pragmatic engagement despite broader confrontation. Together, these dynamics reveal a structural duality within the Nordic sub-complex: while NATO integration consolidates hard-security alignment, the cooperative legal order that once defined Arctic exceptionalism fragments into minimal functionalism.

Kravchik and Kullaa (2025) From cooperation to containment: Reactions in the Nordic states to Russia's and the United States' Arctic assertiveness. *Nordic Review of International Studies* 5, 50–68.

CC BY NC ND

Interregional level

At the interregional level, Nordic security is not merely 'added' to Euro-Atlantic and EU frameworks; it is recomposed by them. Before 2022, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark practised deep de facto integration with NATO and the EU's CSDP while at the same time signalling distance at the level of formal alignment. Crisis politicisation reversed that pattern: when elite preferences and public opinion aligned after Russia's full-scale invasion, windows for rapid formal change opened, ending Sweden's and Finland's non-alignment and Denmark's CSDP opt-out, while Norway, already a NATO member, long informally integrated with the EU's security instruments, and marked by stable Euroscepticism, experienced continuity rather than rupture.

NATO remains the anchor of Nordic defence, "the foundation for Norwegian and allied security" (Government of Norway 2025a, p. 6), but the way Nordic states plug into the NATO–EU interface reflects competing interregional orientations rather than uniform alignment. On one side, Denmark projects an Atlantic–Arctic logic: through Greenland and the GIUK gap it channels allied attention toward North America and the wider Arctic, simultaneously leveraging EU partnerships and its Arctic Council chairship to embed the Arctic within European governance. On the other side, Finland and Norway emphasise a Baltic–High North logic: while Norway remains a core Atlantic NATO state, it increasingly frames the High North as operationally linked to Baltic security through cross-border mobility, reinforcement planning, and the defence of shared critical infrastructure. Together with Finland, Norway thus situates the Arctic and the Baltic as a contiguous theatre for European credibility, pressing NATO and the EU to prioritise rapid reinforcement and military mobility across the Northern Flank. Sweden's accession adds further weight to this Baltic orientation by anchoring Gotland as a forward platform in the Baltic Sea. The result is not duplication but a dual geography of risk, where Nordic security acts as a hinge connecting two different regional complexes: the Atlantic–Arctic and the Baltic–European. Managing this tension has become central to how the Nordic bloc amplifies deterrence from the Barents to the Baltic.

This dual orientation is, for the time being, mediated through the Baltic, which functions as the hinge where Arctic and Euro-Atlantic logics intersect. Institutional wiring across NATO and the EU consolidates this hinge into a shared operational space. On the NATO side, frameworks such as the JEF, the Multinational Division North in Ādaži (with Danish participation), and forward presence initiatives extend Nordic deterrence into Baltic territory while drawing Baltic securitisation logics northward. On the EU side, the Strategic Compass, the Critical Entities Resilience Directive, and Military Mobility 2.0 embed Nordic-style total-defence principles into Baltic infrastructure, linking dual-use corridors like Rail Baltica with reinforcement planning. Finland's accession to NATO further deepens this integration, providing the Baltics with strategic depth and anchoring the High North more firmly within European defence architecture. Together these arrangements institutionalise the Baltic as the key interregional connector, where the Atlantic–Arctic and Baltic–High North orientations are reconciled in practice.

Global in-the-region level

Finally, the EU and Nordic states increasingly project influence into Greenland and the wider Arctic–Atlantic, embedding the region within European strategic logics. The opening of an EU office in Nuuk in 2024 marked the first permanent institutional presence of Brussels in the Arctic, signalling a shift from reliance on Danish mediation to a direct EU–Arctic interface. The simultaneous launch of a strategic partnership with the Kingdom of Denmark on critical raw materials and energy transition situates Greenland within Europe's broader agenda of strategic autonomy and the green shift. Within this broader context of growing EU engagement, Denmark's 2025–27 Arctic Council chairship, led for the first

CC BY NC ND

time by a Greenlandic minister, foregrounds Indigenous rights and climate governance and serves as an additional channel through which Arctic issues are aligned with EU and multilateral policy priorities. These moves illustrate how the Nordics act not only as NATO anchors but also as institutional brokers, translating Arctic concerns into Euro-Atlantic and EU agendas and, in turn, importing EU regulatory and normative frameworks into Arctic governance.

At the global-in-the-region level, Nordic security policy is shaped by systemic pressures stemming from great-power rivalry and the erosion of the international order. For all three Nordic states, Russia is an increasingly aggressive threat. Norway's National Security Strategy 2025 underlines that "the world's largest concentration of nuclear weapons… are situated near our border" (p. 14). Finland's 2024 Government Report follows NATO's Strategic Concept in naming Russia as the most significant and direct threat to Euro-Atlantic security (Government of Finland 2024a, p. 36), while Denmark views Russian revisionism through the Atlantic lens, strengthening sovereignty enforcement and early-warning in Greenland and the Faroes to secure the GIUK reinforcement corridor. Across the sub-complex, Russia is consistently securitised as both a military challenger and the primary driver of global insecurity in the High North.

The United States constitutes a parallel structural pressure, indispensable yet volatile. Signals from the Trump era exposed allied-reliability gaps for small Nordic states, reinforcing strategies of hedging and deeper alignment. The common Nordic logic is to 'keep the US in' while anchoring commitments in Nordic geographies and expertise, a pattern captured by analyses of small-state adjustment and hedging in the region. Norway's offer to host NATO's new Combined Air Operations Centre at Reitan, conditioned on activity being 'anchored in our situational awareness,' exemplifies this calibration; Finland elevates its 1,300-km land border and icebreaking capacity as Alliance-critical assets; Denmark ties US reinforcement to Greenland and the GIUK corridor, reinforcing its indispensability in transatlantic access. Taken together, these moves operationalise a Nordic 'hedging-by-embedding' approach, transforming systemic US volatility into a more stable presence by hard-wiring American power into High North infrastructure and knowledge practices.

China emerges in the Nordic security discourse primarily as a systemic rival in technology, infrastructure, and knowledge production rather than as a direct military threat. Its self-identification as a 'near-Arctic state' and the development of a Polar Silk Road, including research stations in Svalbard and investments in ice-class shipping, embed China in Arctic governance debates. Nordic responses translate these activities into security concerns: Norway restricts Chinese access to ports in the High North, Finland has tightened screening in 5G and data-centre investments and Denmark, under US pressure, blocked Chinese bids to build airports in Greenland. These controversies illustrate how global rivalry penetrates adjacent sectors of infrastructure, technology, and research. This framing is consistent with Nordic security strategies, which increasingly describe China as both an indispensable economic partner and a growing security concern, warranting heightened vigilance in sectors related to technology, infrastructure, and knowledge production (Government of Norway, 2025a, pp. 27).

Legal and institutional frameworks continue to function as stabilisers in an otherwise fragmented order. Norway stresses that "UNCLOS… constitutes the legal framework for all sea areas, including in the Arctic" (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025, p. 15), and Koivurova and Shibata (2023, p. 7) similarly observe that "most treaty-based cooperative frameworks will continue in the Arctic, even if they will likely not be ideally implemented during the time of the Ukraine war." Instruments such as the Polar Code, the Svalbard Treaty, and bilateral fisheries agreements illustrate how treaty law constrains the complete collapse of governance even under systemic rupture.

Yet precisely because these frameworks remain operative, the Arctic also remains unusually open

Kravchik and Kullaa (2025) From cooperation to containment: Reactions in the Nordic states to Russia's and the United States' Arctic assertiveness. *Nordic Review of International Studies* 5, 50–68.

CC BY NC ND

to external involvement. China brands itself a 'near-Arctic state' via the Polar Silk Road, the EU institutionalises its role through the 2024 Nuuk office and Arctic strategy, the UK projects military power through the JEF and Cold Response exercises and Asian powers from Japan to India expand their stakes in shipping and energy. This globalisation of the Arctic confirms that systemic rivalries are not contained regionally but penetrate directly into the sub-complex.

Faced with this permeability, Nordic states respond by positioning themselves as indispensable interpreters of the region within allied structures. Norway claims the role of "a leading and responsible polar nation, with knowledge and idea leadership" (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025, pp. 10–11), Finland emphasises icebreaking and Arctic infrastructure as Alliance-critical assets and Denmark leverages Greenland and the GIUK gap as transatlantic gateways. In this way, Nordic strategies translate systemic volatility into alliance value, producing an epistemic competition over who defines the Arctic within NATO and the EU.

Conclusion

Since 2022, Norway, Finland, and Denmark have not only adjusted to the broader Western strategy of deterring Russia but have also turned their Arctic policies into an independent source of regional security dynamics. The end of the 'Arctic exceptionalism', the idea that the Arctic could remain separate from global rivalries, has failed and led the Arctic away from cooperation to securitisation and militarisation among all Arctic states. Nordic countries have shaped their own sub-regional security complex within the Arctic, unified by a shared perception of Russia as a threat while also wary of the United States, yet still significantly influenced by national priorities and geographic realities.

Empirically, this is visible in how policies differ in focus but converge in instruments. Norway now defines sovereignty through active military presence and protection of critical infrastructure in the north. Finland links the Arctic and the Baltic as one operational space, reinforcing its borders and integrating with NATO. Denmark uses Greenland and the GIUK gap as key points in transatlantic defence, combining symbolic demonstrations of sovereignty with practical surveillance and logistics. Across all three, the military dimension is integrated with civilian security ranging from underwater cables and drones to cyber and energy resilience.

Important asymmetries persist within this convergence. Finland's post-2022 trajectory illustrates a structural gap between practice and policy: the country has securitised the Arctic through deterrence, infrastructure, and alliance integration, yet its strategic framework remains largely unchanged since the 2021 Arctic Policy. This contrasts with Norway's and Denmark's post-invasion revisions of their Arctic strategies and highlights that Nordic securitisation has advanced unevenly, not only geographically but also institutionally.

At the interstate level, defence cooperation among the Nordic states has deepened substantially since 2022. What used to be limited to voluntary coordination has developed into structured interoperability centred on NORDEFCO, which now functions as the backbone of Nordic defence collaboration. Within NORDEFCO, the Nordic states actively exchange assessments and strategic perspectives on regional security, while negotiating agreements on shared infrastructure, transport corridors, and cross-border mobility. These steps have effectively aligned Nordic capabilities with NATO's collective defence structures and strengthened their ability to act as a coherent northern flank within the Euro-Atlantic security complex.

The Nordic countries also play an increasingly important role in connecting the Atlantic and the Baltic-Arctic regions. Rather than losing sovereignty to NATO or the EU, they embed their own expertise and

CC BY NC ND

assets within these institutions: Finland's ice-navigation and Arctic technology, Norway's situational awareness and operational experience, and Denmark's control of key transatlantic routes. In doing so, they turn external uncertainty, including US policy shifts and China's Arctic interests, into manageable dependencies through regional coordination and institutional links.

Theoretically, the findings confirm the usefulness of viewing the Arctic as a Great Power Regional Security Complex, within which the Nordic countries act as regional powers exercising disproportionate influence due to their proximity, dense institutional networks, and high interdependence of security threats. From the perspective of securitisation theory, the key transformation lies in the normalisation of 'extraordinary measures': the shift from political restraint toward the reconfiguration of law, infrastructure, and governance as instruments of defence. The outcome is not militarisation per se, but a broad concept of 'total defence,' in which population resilience, communications, energy security, and logistics become as essential to sovereignty as military forces.

In practical terms, the conclusions are twofold. First, the resilience of the Nordic subcomplex depends on addressing its critical bottlenecks: legal (harmonising cross-border troop movement and export regimes), infrastructural (compatibility of ports, roads, airfields, and subsea infrastructure), financial (long procurement cycles for air defence and major equipment), and political (balancing central and peripheral interests within the Kingdoms and maintaining legitimacy in Arctic communities). Second, the strategic effect of Nordic cooperation will depend on maintaining the region's dual geography of risk as complementary rather than competitive: Denmark's Atlantic reinforcement corridor should continue to serve as the logistical extension of Finland's and Norway's northern-Baltic operational theatre. In other words, the value of the Nordic subcomplex lies in transforming geographic diversity into operational abundance — multiple secure routes, nodes, and monitoring systems that enhance collective resilience.

CC BY NC ND

References

Arctic Council (2019) *Statement by Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting, 7 May 2019, Lappi Arena, Rovaniemi, Finland*. Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/11374/2409 (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Breaking Defense (2025) 'Denmark picks Europe's SAMP/T for long-range air defense, shuns Patriot', *Breaking Defense*, 17 September. Available at: https://breakingdefense.com/2025/09/denmark-picks-europes-samp-t-for-long-range-air-defense-shuns-patriot/ (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

Buzan, B. and Wæver, O. (2003) *Regions and powers: The structure of international security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buzan, B., Wæver, O. and de Wilde, J. (1998) *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Bykova, A. (2024) 'NATO has always been an Arctic alliance (Part II)', *The Arctic Institute*, 11 June. Available at: https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/nato-arctic-alliance-part-ii/ (Accessed: 14 September 2025).

Council on Foreign Relations (2024) 'Transition 2025: Donald Trump Sets His Sights on Canada, Greenland, and the Panama Canal'. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/articles/transition-2025-donald-trump-sets-his-sights-canada-greenland-and-panama-canal (Accessed: 28 February 2026).

Council on Foreign Relations (2026) 'Greenland's Independence: What Would It Mean for US Interests?', *Council on Foreign Relations*, 22 January. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/articles/greenlands-independence-what-would-mean-us-interests (Accessed: 27 January 2026).

CSIS (2025) *Seizing Greenland is worse than a bad deal*. Available at: https://www.csis.org/analysis/seizing-greenland-worse-bad-deal (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Danish Ministry of Defence (2022) 'Security and Defence Policy Report 2022', *Government of Denmark*. Available at: https://www.fmn.dk/globalassets/fmn/dokumenter/strategi/rsa/-regeringens_security-policy-report_uk_web-.pdf (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

Danish Ministry of Defence (2025) 'Second Agreement on the Arctic and North Atlantic'. Available at: https://www.fmn.dk/globalassets/fmn/dokumenter/2025/-publikation-om-delaftale-2-om-arktis-og-nordatlanten-eng-.pdf (Accessed: 28 February 2026).

Defence Intelligence Service (2025) 'Assessment of the Hybrid Threat Against Denmark', *Danish Defence Intelligence Service*. Available at: https://www.fe-ddis.dk/globalassets/fe/dokumenter/2025/trusselsvurderinger/-assessment-of-the-hybrid-threat-against-denmark-.pdf (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

European Commission (2024) 'Communication COM (2024) 570 final: On countering hybrid threats from the weaponisation of migration and strengthening security at the EU's external borders', *European Commission*. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52024DC0570 (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Fakhoury, R. (2023) 'Polar stars: Toward an epistemological understanding of security constellations and the Arctic case', *Global Studies Quarterly*, 3(4), ksad058. DOI: 10.1093/isagsq/ksad058.

Finnish Defence Forces (2025) 'Military Intelligence Review 2025', *Defence Command Finland*. Available at: https://puolustusvoimat.fi/documents/1948673/2014902/PV_sotilastiedustelu_raportti_EN_2025_web.pdf (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications (2025) 'Nordic transport ministers issue a statement on military mobility and security of supply', Press release, 13 May, *Ministry of Transport and Communications*. Available at: https://www.lvm.fi/en/-/nordic-transport-ministers-issue-a-statement-on-military-mobility-and-security-of-supply (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

cc BY NC ND

Forsberg, T. (2017) 'Finland and NATO: Strategic choices and identity conceptions', in Cottey, A. (ed.) *The European neutrals and NATO: Non-alignment, partnership, membership?* London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 85–106. DOI: 10.1057/978-1-137-59524-9_5.

Government of Denmark (2011) 'Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Government of Greenland, and Government of the Faroe Islands*. Available at: https://library.arcticportal.org/1890/1/DENMARK.pdf (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

Government of Denmark (2022) 'Agreement for Danish Defence 2024–2033', *Ministry of Defence*. Available at: https://www.fmn.dk/en/topics/agreements-and-economi/agreement-for-danish-defence/ (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Government of Finland (2013) 'Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013', *Prime Minister's Office*. Available at: https://library.arcticportal.org/1888/1/Arktinen%20strategia%202013%20en.pdf (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Government of Finland (2021) 'Arctic Policy Strategy'. *Publications of the Finnish Government* 2021:53, Prime Minister's Office. Available at: http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-872-7 (Accessed: 14 September 2025).

Government of Finland (2024a) 'Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy', *Publications of the Finnish Government* 2024:35, Prime Minister's Office. Available at: http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-929-8 (Accessed: 14 September 2025).

Government of Finland (2024b) 'Finland withdraws from the Barents Euro-Arctic Council', Press release, 21 November. Available at: https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/finland-withdraws-from-the-barents-euro-arctic-council (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Government of Greenland (2024) 'Greenland in the World: Nothing About Us Without Us – Foreign, Security and Defense Policy 2024–2033', *Government of Greenland*. Available at: https://paartoq.gl/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Greenlands_Foreign_-Security_and_Defense_Policy_2024_2033.pdf (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

Government of Iceland (2025) 'Statement regarding NATO's Forward Land Forces in Finland', *Embassy of Iceland*, Available at: https://www.government.is/diplomatic-missions/embassy-article/2025/06/25/Statement-regarding-NATOs-Forward-Land-Forces-in-Finland/ (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

Government of Norway (2009) 'New Building Blocks in the North: The Next Step in the Government's High North Strategy', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/ud/vedlegg/nordomradene/new_building_blocks_in_the_north.pdf (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

Government of Norway (2024) 'Military transport corridor to be established in the North'. Available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/military-transport-corridor-to-be-established-in-the-north/id3046172 (Accessed: 19 September 2025).

Government of Norway (2025a) 'National Security Strategy 2025', *Ministry of Justice and Public Security*. Available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/national-security-strategy/id3099304 (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Government of Norway (2025b) 'Norway in the High North: Arctic Policy for a New Reality', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/norway-in-the-high-north-arctic-policy-for-a-new-reality/id3116990 (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

High North News (2023) 'Denmark wants to prioritize Arctic defense and put the Baltic Sea second', *High North News*, 13 March. Available at: https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/denmark-wants-prioritize-arctic-defense-and-put-baltic-sea-second (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

CC BY NC ND

High North News (2025) 'Norwegian MoD: Norway will participate in Forward Land Forces in Northern Finland', *High North News*, 25 June. Available at: https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/norwegian-mod-norway-will-participate-forward-land-forces-northern-finland (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

Ilulissat Declaration (2008) 'Adopted at the Arctic Ocean Conference, Ilulissat, Greenland, 27–29 May 2008.' Available at: https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2008-Ilulissat-Declaration.pdf (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Joint Arctic Command (2025) 'Implementing Denmark's Arctic and North Atlantic Defence Initiatives', *Danish Armed Forces*, 10 February. Available at: https://www.forsvaret.dk/en/news/2025/joint-arctic-command-answers-questions/ (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

Koivurova, T. and Shibata, A. (2023) 'After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022: Can we still cooperate with Russia in the Arctic?', *Polar Record*, 59(e12), pp. 1–9. DOI: 10.1017/S0032247423000049.

Ministry of Defence, Denmark (2025) 'New agreement strengthens the presence of the Danish Defence in the Arctic and North Atlantic region', Press release, 23 June. Available at: https://www.fmn.dk/en/news/2025/new-agreement-strengthens-the-presence-of-the-danish-defence-in-the-arctic-and-north-atlantic-region/ (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

NORDEFCO (2023) 'Vision 2030 for Nordic Defence Cooperation'. Available at: https://www.nordefco.org/files/NORDEFCO-vision-2030-.pdf (Accessed: 7 October 2025).

Norwegian Intelligence Service (2025) 'Focus 2025: Assessment of Current Security Challenges', *Etterretningstjenesten*. Available at: https://www.etterretningstjenesten.no/publikasjoner/focus/focus2025_contents/Focus25-Chapter1 (Accessed: 5 October 2025).

Norwegian Ministry of Defence (2024) 'The Norwegian Defence Pledge'. Available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/en/documents/the-norwegian-defence-pledge/id3032809/ (Accessed: 28 February 2026).

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2025) 'Norge i nord: Nordområdepolitikken i en ny virkelighet'. Available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/norge-i-nord-nordomradepolitikken-i-en-ny-virkelighet/id3116799/(Accessed: 28 February 2026).

Norwegian National Security Authority (2025) 'Risk Report 2025: Annual Threat and Risk Assessments', *NSM*. Available at: https://nsm.no/getfile.php/1314212-1738741587/NSM/Filer/Dokumenter/Rapporter/Risiko%202025.pdf (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Norwegian Police Security Service (2025) 'National Threat Assessment 2025', *PST*. Available at: https://www.pst.no/globalassets/2025/nasjonal-trusselvurdering-2025/_nasjonal-trusselvurdering-2025_uu-engelsk.pdf (Accessed: 6 October 2025).

Østhagen, A. (2021) 'The Arctic security region: Misconceptions and contradictions', *Polar Geography*, 44(2), pp. 1–20. DOI: 10.1080/1088937X.2021.1881645.

Polar Connection (2019) 'Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Rovaniemi', *Polar Connection*, 7 May. Available at: https://polarconnection.org/arctic-council-ministerial-rovaniemi/ (Accessed: 14 September 2025).

Raik, K., Terlikowski, M. and Baumann, M. (2025) 'Beyond burden sharing: Conceptualizing the European pillar of NATO', DGAP Policy Brief 14, *German Council on Foreign Relations*. DOI :10.60823/DGAP-25-42323-en.

Ritzaus Bureau (2025) 'Droner lukkede Københavns Lufthavn: Alvorligt anslag mod kritisk infrastruktur, siger Mette F.', *Sermitsiaq*, 23 September. Available at: https://www.sermitsiaq.ag/samfund/droner-lukkede-kobenhavns-lufthavn-alvorligt-anslag-mod-kritisk-infrastruktur-siger-mette-f/2285278 (Accessed: 13 October 2025).

cc BY NC ND

Sadurski, L.K. (2024) 'The Arctic as a regional security complex', *Polar Geography*, 47(1), pp. 1–15. DOI: 10.1080/1088937X.2024.2310674.

Sergunin, A. (2020) Russia and the Arctic Council: Towards a New Agenda, PCRC Working Paper No. 13, *Polar Cooperation Research Centre (PCRC), Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies (GSICS), Kobe University*. https://www.research.kobe-u.ac.jp/gsics-pcrc/pdf/PCRCWPS/PCRC_13_Sergunin.pdf.

Winkelmann, I. (2008) 'The Arctic: Perspectives and Challenges', SWP Comments 18/2008, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*. Available at: https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/256061/1/2008C18.pdf (Accessed: 5 October 2025).

CC BY NC ND