



Regional Security-building in Europe

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region

José Luis Masegosa Carrillo

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Preface

The Barents Region has rapidly developed into one of the most interesting and dynamic cross-border regions in the new Europe that emerged after the abolition of the Iron Curtain. For CERUM as a Centre for regional science it is of utmost interest to follow-up the last developments in this part of Northern Europe. Our interest comprises how new links are created, old barriers are removed, new barriers are established, and the development of regional and international negotiations in the region.

Stabilization and security-building are key words in this process. Both military, economically, and environmentally, the region contains various forms of tension. As a part of a larger project mainly supported by the Swedish Agency for Civil Emergency Planning (ÖCB), José Luis Masegosa was invited to CERUM in order to present and further develop his thesis "Regional security-building in Europe. The Barents Euro-Arctic Region". The thesis had been originally presented at the College of Europe, Warsaw and supervised by Dr. Michel Foucher, Director of the Observatoire Européen de Géopolitique, Lyon (France) and Professor at the College of Europe. We are glad to have the possibility to publish the revised version of his thesis in this series. It gives anyone with an interest in the Barents region an interesting analysis of the new prerequisites and objectives forcing the actors in the region.

Umeå, November 1998

Lars Westin
Director of CERUM

Foreword

A Spanish researcher born in Almería by the Mediterranean coast of South-eastern Spain decided during his one-year stay at the College of Europe – Natolin (Poland) to focus his Master’s Thesis on the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. A large part of his thesis was written in Sarajevo, where he used to serve as long-term observer for the OSCE during the Bosnian elections in September 1997 and it will be published by CERUM, a Swedish think-tank specialized in Northern Europe Security issues. This is a quite original and encouraging intellectual nomadism and two lessons can be drawn from his work.

First, Europe, conceived as a voluntary political project, will not consolidate without stressing what real basis is culture and thinking. As it used to be in the past, before the historical period when exclusive Nation-states imposed a kind of culture police along their borders, time has come again for Europeans to intellectual travelling, multi-national research and all-Europe networking. José Luis Maasegosa has exemplified this new European cultural awareness by producing a valuable essay based in fields’ studies.

A second lesson of his work dedicated to the security of the European High North, a former and still problematic geopolitical border of the European Union, lays in the credible assumption of the “indivisibility” of European security, either strategic security or environmental security, as it was clearly put in the Kirkinen Declaration of 1993, due to a Norwegian initiative.

As the European Union is discovering its Northern dimension, –Finland will preside over the E.U. during the second semester of 1999, after Germany, before France, and Sweden in 2000– the essay presented by José Luis Masegosa is a useful contribution to a more European understanding of security issues in this part of the continent.

Michel Foucher
Professor at the College of Europe –Natolin
Warsaw (Poland)

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank the Center for Regional Science of Umeå University for giving me the opportunity to present and further this essay. Comments and suggestions offered by Lars Westin and Malin Gunnarsson are most gratefully acknowledged.

This essay owes very much to Dr. Michel Foucher whose always helpful comments, ideas, and moral support were invaluable.

An earlier version of this research paper was presented at the College of Europe, Warsaw in November 1997.

Keywords: Barents region, Regional cooperation, Security-building, Northern countries, High north

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1 Introduction

Contrary to the simple bloc-to-bloc dynamics of the Cold War, the Barents Euro-Arctic framework has emerged in the 90's in the middle of the complex Post-Cold War World. It is born in the midst of two ongoing processes at the European level: the EU-led continental unification trend and fragmentation and national-building trend in the East.

A decade ago, who could have considered any kind of cooperation between East and West? Even more difficult, could you have imagined cooperation in one of the most sensitive front lines of the Cold War? Interaction between states and people across borderlines was not in the dictionary of the great powers in the High North. Did you know that nowhere on Earth is the concentration of civil and military nuclear reactors as high as in the Kola Peninsula?¹

Although the European High North is a region of tension, it also affords many opportunities. In addition to the powerful Russian military build-up in the Kola Peninsula, the environmental problems are quite serious; and the differences in economic development between the Western and Eastern sides of the region is huge. On the other hand, we all know that there are few resources that have greater strategic and security-policy significance than petroleum. In the words of Per Antonsen, adviser to the Norwegian Ministry of Environment, a new *Middle East* could emerge in the European Arctic². The total recoverable reserves in the Russian sector of the Barents Sea are estimated at approximately 3 billion tons of oil, not including the onshore sector. The Shtokmanovskoye gas field in the Barents Sea, which contains 2,500 billion m³ of gas, is the largest gas field in the world³. The total gas reserves of the Barents Sea could be as large as 10 trillion cubic m³⁴.

1.1 The Kirkenes Declaration and the birth of a region

The Barents idea was initiated at the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Later it was discussed by the Russian and Norwegian Ministers for Foreign Affairs during the Helsinki meeting of the CSCE in 1992. Ministers of Environment from the Nordic countries and the Russian Federation met in Kirkenes on 3-4 September 1992. They signed a joint declaration on the principles and priorities of future cooperation in fields like environmental

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1. In particular, the Russian Northern Fleet accounts for 18% of the world's total nuclear reactors. Thomas NILSEN, Igor KUDRIK & Alexandr NIKITIN. *The Russian Northern fleet. Sources of radioactive contamination*. Bellona Report Volume 2: 1996.
 2. Personal interview with Per Antonsen, adviser at the Ministry of Environment of Norway. 5/4/97,
 3. Vigdis NYGAARD. *Oil and gas in the north-western part of Russia*. INSROP WORKING PAPER. NO. 54 - 1996, III. 02.3.
 4. *Economic characteristics of the Barents Region*. BEARC. Working Group on economic cooperation. Helsinki: Finnish Barents Group Oy, August 1995.

protection and sustainable development. They referred, in particular, to the Barents region. Four months later, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Russian Federation, Denmark, Iceland and the European Commission of the European Communities signed the *Declaration on cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region* in Kirkenes on 11 January 1993. Participants from Germany, USA, Canada, France, Poland, Japan and the United Kingdom participated as observers. The resulting document, Kirkenes Declaration, is a declaration of good intentions by the participant governments⁵. The participants saw the Barents process as part of the process of evolving European cooperation and integration. They expressed their conviction that expanded cooperation will contribute substantially to stability and progress in the area⁶. The participants decided that regional cooperation includes the county of Norrbotten in Sweden, the county of Lapland in Finland, the counties of Finnmark, Troms and Nordland in Norway, the counties of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk and the republic of Karelia in Russia⁷. The Västerbotten County in Sweden and the Oulu County in Finland were connected to the Barents framework as observers since early 1997. The Regional Council admitted those counties to the Barents framework in November 1997. Cooperation was to take place in the following fields: tourism, environment, communication and infrastructure, science and technology, transfer of knowledge and education, economic and industrial cooperation, indigenous people, cultural relations, agriculture, and health.

1.2 Purpose

We do not pretend to analyse all of the dimensions of the Barents project. We think that we face a multi-goals project stemming from the different targets that the initiative attempts to reach. We will however focus our attention only on the security dimension. In short, the main goal of this research paper will be to view the Barents project from the security perspective; consequently, we will attempt to see how profoundly the serious economic and environmental problems in the region have permeated the security thinking of the actors involved. We will attempt to see how cooperation may lead to the improvement of the security perceptions of the actors in the High North.

1.3 Plan

Four fundamental questions arise from the above brief background. Answering these questions is imperative to grasping the security dimension of the Barents project.

1. What elements were used by the architects of the project to draw the region into its actual borders? In particular, we will present the elements that allow the Barents actors discuss about the existence of a political region.

5. The legal force of it is, to some extent, more than doubtful. In that sense, Swedish Minister Lars Karlberg called it *a self-regulating document without binding force*. Personal interview with Lars Karlberg, Minister, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 13/5/97 - 14/5/97, Stockholm.

6. Kirkenes Declaration. First Session of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, 11th January 1993.

7. The Republic of Karelia was included after the second session of the BEARC in Tromsø on 14-15th September 1994.

2. How have the participants provided the ongoing cooperation with an institutional framework?
3. Cooperation is the lifeblood of the Barents body. We will sketch the main chapters of the cooperation process.
4. The fourth and fifth part of this essay will be of an analytical nature. We will try to catch the security compound in the Barents project. How do the changes in the security agenda of Europe leave room for such an initiative? We will later address the geostrategic importance of the region and its extreme geopolitical complexity. We will also point out the interests feeding the involvement of the actors and their new security policies after the end of the Cold War. We will use the former analytical tools in order to comprehend the security compound of the Barents Region in chapter five.

2 Elements defining the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) in space and time. A political region?

Unless the Nordic countries and Russia make the inhabitants of the region think in similar terms and see the same picture of problems and solutions, these countries will not realise the two main targets of this framework: normalisation of their relationship and stabilisation of the situation by tackling the main problems. This is the reasoning why the national actors have insisted in highlighting the *community of interests* and common identity of the region.

The Barents cooperation embraces the counties of Västerbotten and Norrbotten in Sweden, the counties of Finnmark, Troms and Nordland in Norway, the counties of Lapland and Oulu in Finland, and the counties of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk and the Republic of Karelia in Russia. We should point out that cooperation within the Barents framework deals with landbased activities. The Norwegian government stressed this principle from the beginning due to the unsettled sovereignty issues in the Barents Sea.⁸

What are the elements that enable the participants to talk about the BEAR as a political region?⁹ Our point of departure will be the comprehensive approach of the Finnish geographer Paasi¹⁰, and his coincidences with Stokke¹¹. Both claim that the core of regionality is the interactive and discursive distinctiveness of a more or less geographic area, that is to say, individuals and groups view problems and opportunities in the area through a regional prism, implying that the regional level is seen as relevant, when responding to the challenges. The process as a whole refers to the idea of reorienting people's minds to think in terms of regional framework and to make it serve as a natural frame of reference in their day-to-day attitude. Distinctiveness and interactions, we could say, are the sources, which draw the boundaries of the region at one concrete time. When cooperation is institutionalised, it leads to deepen the cooperation and may lead to some kind of integration.

8. See below *Fields of cooperation* .

9. In order to study the region as a political phenomenon, the methodology has evolved in political literature. The traditional approach, *Essentialism*, focuses on regions as given entities (of some kind of common identity). They aspire at explaining the existence of regions *a priori* because of linguistic, cultural and social similarities or the preferences of the hegemonic powers. Criticising the traditional approach, *Region-Building Theorists*, or Constructivism, assert the possibility of political actors to be able to define and developing regional entities. That is to say that regions may be, to some extent, created. Geir B. HØNNE-LAND. *Northerners: Common Identity or World Apart? in The East-West interface in the European North*. Stockholm: Nordisk Samhällsgeografisk Tidskrift, 1995.

Without a doubt a feeling of common identity even pre-fabricated or pre-established is crucial for making people think through a regional prism and talk about a political region. Former Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bjørn Tore Godal, said before the Royal Geographical Society in London *a regional identity emerged in the Barents region throughout the history*¹² This assertion raises the fundamental question: is there any kind of common identity among population in the European High North or is that assertion part of an identity politics strategy?¹³

In the following paragraphs, we are going to spell out the factors that are used by the actors to define the region in the space and the time and that enable them to talk about the BEAR as a political region. We will see that some compounds of regional identity are of a *given* nature, while in others the political actors make use of certain myths and experiences to build and foster a feeling of common identity. Thus identity politics, as we shall see below, are present in the Barents process.

Firstly, the think-tanks of the project have gone through the history of the High North to pick up those fragments of good Russo-Nordic relationship that are the most interesting in building a Northern identity. Thus, the *Pomor* cooperation period has especially been used in this attempt. The *Pomor* trade was the *cornerstone* of the Norwegian-Russian relations from late 18th century to the first quarter of the 20th century and Arkhangelsk, its first trading town. Norwegian fish in exchange for Russian grain and wood products was the base of this trading circle. Not too much attention has been paid to other *conflictual* relations throughout history. In fact, the region constituted an arena of clashes between the Northern Lutheran world and the Russian Orthodox world. The delimitation dispute between Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea is the last conflict that survives the rivalry between the great powers of Northern Europe over the control of this strategic and resource-rich region. In my opinion, despite the importance of the collaboration experience, what

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10. As to the concept of political regions, the Finnish geographer Paasi defines it as a *expression of time-space specific relations and structures of society*, being formed through the development of society, the latter with its structures also being a part of the global organisation of social spatial reality. We could appreciate the down-top dynamic in this definition since society has a key role in regional-building. However, Paasi does not neglect the role of the state. From a *constructivist* approach, he proposes different interacting stages in the institutionalisation of regions in which the state appears to be a relevant actor. First, the assumption of territorial space emphasises boundaries of some kind as a requirement for the emergence of a regional consciousness. These boundaries reveal themselves through the development of social practices, common experiences and similar geographical conditions that identify the region as different from its surrounding. Second, the development of conceptual shape that refers to the establishment of certain structures of territorial symbols and the development of institutions, which maintain the image of the region. The establishment of an institutional framework formalises the cooperation. Bo SVENSSON. *Searching for a new potential in Reconstructing Survival*. Umeå (Sweden): Umeå University, 1996.
 11. Rune CASTBERG, Olav S. STOKKE and Willy ØSTRENG. *The dynamic of the Barents Region in The Barents Region*. London: SAGE Publications, 1994.
 12. Bjørn Tore GODAL. *In Nansen footsteps. The Barents Cooperation: a vision for a better Europe*. London: Royal Geographical Society, 5 October 1995.
 13. The latter concept implies that identity is something that may be built. This is a main compound of the region-building approach. Identity politics advocate the case of identity as a relation rather than a possession. External differentiation becomes an inevitable part of identity politics. Geir B. HØNNELAND, op.cit.

is relevant is to underscore that the European High North lived up its own historical experience whereas collaborative or conflictual. That is to say that, this region evolved in a *genuine* historical dynamic of interrelations. So, it is this complex of rivalry/friendships that constituted a rule throughout the centuries what could to some extent account for an element of common identity rather than the only collaborative experience.

Second, the *uniqueness* of the region may be an important compound of identity of the Barents region. Its population lives in the hardest climatic conditions in the world. Isolation, remoteness, Europe's last wilderness, harsh climate, sparse population distinguish the northernmost regions of Europe. On the other hand, the region contains the world's biggest compilation of strategic nuclear forces as the Northern Fleet is based in Murmansk. Furthermore, it has thus far been the only region in continental Europe where Russia and NATO have a common border.

Third, it is true that a set of important similarities between these northern regions may be tracked. In fact, they constitute a periphery vis-à-vis the more developed Southern parts. Further, the case is made for scarce populations in regions at long distance to the national centres. At the same time, those regions present the same economic structure: they are rich in raw materials, oil, gas, fishery and forestry and present a 90% export rate. These common features lead, to some extent, to a community of interests among the populations of the European High North and reinforce the feeling of common identity. At this point, Chanjay Chaturvedi refers to a *convergence of interests* as an important compound of the concept of political region¹⁴.

Fourth, the small indigenous Saami community has been mentioned as another unifying element in the region. The first inhabitants of the region, the Saami, are an indigenous population concentrated to the northerly parts of the Barents region. There are 45,000 people of Saami origin living in Norway, 5,000 in Finnish Lapland, around 3,000 in North Sweden and other thousands in the Kola Peninsula. Fishing and reindeer keeping are the basis for the Saami life and culture, although the Saami have been influenced culturally by the rest of the population. They have set up representative political bodies in every Nordic country (Saami parliament in Norway - Sametinget - in 1989, in Sweden in 1993 and in Finland in 1973). Their political goals are to protect their way of life, the northern environment, and the Saami culture, language and identity.

Finally, political, economic and social interactions have rapidly spread after the end of the Cold War. At the political level, and in a wider sense, populations in the Arctic began to organise themselves as international actors in the late 80'. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference and the Northern Forum are important initiatives coming from the civil society¹⁵. These initiatives for cooperation forced the state to act if it wanted to keep its traditional competencies. Regionalism became a reality in the Arctic through the Finnish initiative of the Rovaniemi process and the Barents region, latest attempt in this

14. Sanjai CHATURVEDI. *The Arctic today: New Thinking in Dreaming of the Barents Region*. Tampere: TAPRI Research Report. No. 73, 1996.

15. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference is among the first organisations which gave a collective voice to one group of the Arctic Indigenous people. The Northern Forum is an unofficial organisation that brings together all the people living in the northern provinces of the eight countries related to the Circumpolar North.

flow of political, cross-boundary initiatives involving countries in Northern Europe.

As to the economic interactions, they result from the wide discrepancy in economic starting points of the functional Nordic market-economies and the Russian economy, which is restructuring its market system. In general, the restructuration and modernisation of the Russian economy requires the knowledge, venture and flow of capital from the West. Interactions are deepening in several fields such as the resource exploitation, oil and gas fields, the Northern Sea Route, the forestry and fishing industries. This situation must certainly be mutually beneficial. Joint ventures are one of the tools to address this challenge in the Barents region.

3 The institutional framework

The emergence of institutions to deal with the cooperation network is a necessary step in the constitution process of a political region¹⁶. First, by providing a measure of regularity, institutions can help politicians to come together and identify areas particularly suitable for collaboration. Second, institutions might facilitate the vital information-gathering function. Third, we should take account of the influence that institutions have in the formation of a regional identity because of their *pulling-together* force.

The Kirkenes Declaration established the Barents Euro-Arctic Region Council (BEARC). This is an intergovernmental body whose composition may vary from the Ministers for Foreign Affairs to the Ministers of Transport. At this point, it presents the same characteristic of the Council of the EU¹⁷. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs meet annually in the chairholding country, which sets at this time the agenda for its year of chairmanship. It rotates among the member countries on an annual basis. According to the Kirkenes Declaration, the BEARC objectives are to provide impetus to existing cooperation, consider new initiatives and proposals, and promote sustainable development in the region. We may consider that the Council is a political body, defining the framework for regional activities, and supporting financially regional efforts given the limited resources of the regional level. Decisions in the BEARC are based on consensus¹⁸. The Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), made up by members of every participating country, acts as a deputy organ for the Council. The CSO's tasks are to discuss matters of concern for the cooperation, prepare the annual Council meeting and maintain contacts between the central and regional levels. In addition to the BEARC and the CSO, three workgroups operate at the central level: Northern Sea Route Group, the Group for economic cooperation and the Environmental Group - Joint Task Force.

At the same time, the regional leaders of the above-mentioned counties met in Kirkenes on 11 January 1993 and signed a Protocol Agreement from their statutory meeting¹⁹. They established the Regional Council (RC), consisting of the highest political or administrative leaders in the constituting regional entities of Norway, Finland, Sweden and Russia. In addition, one representative from the elected organs of the indigenous Saami population has a seat in the Council. The RC represents the core of the ongoing cooperation. The Protocol Agreement establishes that 1st- the Council decides itself the frequency of the meetings and 2nd- resolutions are taken by consensus. The chairman is elected for a two-year period. All cooperation must be

16. Quoted by Bo SVENSSON. *Searching for a new potential in Reconstructing Survival*. Umeå (Sweden): Umeå University, 1996.

17. According to the point 4th of the Term of Reference for the BEARC (Annex 1 to the Kirkenes Declaration), *the Council will meet at Foreign Minister or other relevant ministerial level*.

18. 9th Point of the Term of reference for the BEARC, op. cit.

based on regional needs²⁰. The objectives of this particular institution are not sufficiently clear in the constituent document because they are interfused with the general targets of the regional cooperation²¹. The RC determines the annual plan and budget for the regional cooperation, according to the Protocol. In short, most of the initiative and the responsibility for cooperation rest on the regional representatives themselves. The Executive Regional Committee (ERC) is the second most important body at the regional level and is appointed by the RC. The Committee manages and coordinates current cooperation efforts in accordance with instructions from the RC. The RC has set up ten special committees that develop and implement projects in their respective issue-areas (tourism, environment, communications and infrastructure, science and technology, transfer of knowledge and education, economic and industrial cooperation, indigenous people, cultural relations, agriculture, and health).

This Protocol Agreement also established a Secretariat, directly under the Chairman of the ERC, for the purpose of initiating and safeguarding the ongoing work. The Barents Secretariat is connected to and financed by the leaders of the RC. The Secretariat prepares the meetings of the Council and maintains contacts between the administrative organs and levels. The Secretariat follows the country that holds the chairmanship of the RC²². The Barents Secretariat plays a key role as a linking-pin, a central node in the BEAR network of domestic and transnational contacts, information and command. According to Jan-Egil Nyland, information officer at the Kirkenes Secretariat, the Barents Secretariat is responsible for assisting the RC, representation of the region and assisting the chairmanship. On the other hand, they take ideas from the civil society and transmit them to the top²³.

We would like to add some considerations to the exposé of the institutional framework. All this institutional set up includes some new qualitative fea-

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19. Protocol Agreement from the Statutory Meeting of the Regional Council of the Barents Region. Kirkenes, 11th January 1993. The targets that they fixed for the foundation of the interregional cooperation network were the following: 1st- to secure a peaceful and stable development in the region. 2nd- to strengthen and develop the cultural ties among the people of the region. 3rd- to encourage the establishment of new and expansion of existing bilateral and multilateral relations in the region. 4th- to lay the foundation for a strong economic and social development in the region with emphasis on an active and sustainable management of nature and resources. 5th- to contribute to a development which takes into account the interests of the indigenous people and arranges for their active participation.
 20. Hannu VIRANTO, Chairman of the Barents Regional Committee. *Action Minutes. Conclusion from the Joint Meeting of CSO and Regional Committee*, 18th February 1997. Bjørn Tore Godal, Former Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, insists in the *driving force character* of the RC. Speech before the Royal Geographical Society in London on 5th October 1995. B. T. GODAL, op. cit.
 21. See above Note No 19
 22. Norwegians wanted to have a permanent Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes. However, there was no agreement. A communication from the four Ministers for Foreign Affairs moved the Barents Secretariat from Kirkenes to Norrbotten in 1995. Six Secretariats have thus far been established (Kirkenes, Luleå, Rovaniemi, Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and Petrozavodsk) either as a separate organisation or as a part of the regional administration in one of the regional entities. KARLBERG, op.cit.
 23. Personal interview with Jan-Egil Nyland, Information Officer at the Norwegian Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes. 7/4/97, Oslo.

tures. First, the formal power to make binding decisions is established at two levels: the intergovernmental BEARC and the interregional RC. This two-layered system is a feature that distinguishes the BEAR from other similar organisations, e.g. the Baltic Sea or the Black Sea regional frameworks. Cooperation between the BEARC/CSO and the RC/ERC is the heart of the whole system. Thus the necessary coordination network has been set up in 1997 in order to insure coherence between the two decision levels²⁴. Second, the RC enjoys, to some extent, an independent status vis-à-vis the BEARC. The idea is that the interregional level shall play a leading operative role and be responsible for most of the work within the framework previously defined by the BEARC. As to the latter, attention must be paid to the fact that, given the collaboration network between both levels, the influence of the Regional Council in the Barents Council' decision making is foreseeable. However, RC's making-decision power is subordinated to the Barents Council financial leverage. In conclusion, the above indicates a developed and structured institutional framework in comparison to those setting-up in similar organisations as the Baltic Sea Council, the Central European Initiative or the Black Sea Cooperation Council.

24. In this sense, the joint cooperation between both develops in the following way: the Chairman of the RC would be invited to attend the CSO meeting at least once during the period of chairmanship. The CSO and the ERC should hold a minimum of one joint meeting per year. A representative of the ERC committee would be invited to CSO meetings. Delegates from the CSO shall be requested to attend ERC meetings as well. Finally, the joint cooperation between RC and BEARC specialist working groups is to be intensified, with mutually realised concrete projects as the goal. Hannu VIRANTO, *op. cit.*

4 Fields of cooperation

We think that it is necessary to write a few paragraphs about the ongoing cooperation itself in order to understand the security dimension of the Barents project. Cooperation is imperative to finding better solutions for common problems. Cooperation emphasises the common interests of the different actors involved in the framework and makes them feel like being members of a community of interests. In a second step, cooperation leads to mutual understanding through the knowledge of the other actors and enhances mutual trust between them. Mutual trust, confidence and better understanding as promoted by cooperation are key elements in enhancing feelings of security among the actors.

According to the Kirkenes Declaration, cooperation is going to be carried out in the following fields: environment, economy, science and technology, regional infrastructure, indigenous people, human contacts, cultural relations and tourism. Let us first of all point out that the core of the current cooperation in the Barents region is the environment and to a lesser degree the economic field. On the other hand, we should pay attention to the exclusion of fishery policies and oil and gas extraction from the cooperation scheme.

As to the exclusions, despite the relevance of fishing and extraction activities for the economy of the region, the Barents framework is treated as a terrestrial phenomenon. The latter is basically due to the unsettled sovereignty issues between Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea. After the introduction of an exclusive economic zone in 1977 by both countries, there are 175,000 km² where claims overlap. The main dispute stems from the fact that the two countries rely on different principles for drawing up boundaries²⁵. Moreover Russia, among other countries, has frequently opposed the Norwegian interpretation of the Paris Treaty (9th February 1920), which put Svalbard Islands under Norwegian sovereignty²⁶. The main *enjeu* of this dispute is economic since both countries are well aware that the contested area is rich in oil, gas and fish. For years the general policy line of Norway had been that the unresolved delimitation issue constituted an obstacle to the development of more extensive cooperation with Russia in the North. Thus the establishment of

25. Norway holds that the boundary should be drawn according to the median line principle in international law, whereas the other side has maintained that due to special circumstances, the boundary line should follow the sector line.

26. In particular, Russia opposes the Norwegian project of constitution of a nature reserve in the Svalbard Island. Norway considers this measure as a necessary restriction to protect the vulnerable environment of the islands. Russia supports its position on the Paris Treaty's provision giving all the parties equal rights to exploit Svalbard's economic resources, including the waters and seabed around the Islands. The situation is particularly complicated by the fact that there are two Russian communities and only one Norwegian. In addition, the Russian population outnumbers the Norwegian by two to one. Alexander A. SERGOUNIN. *In Search of a new strategy in the Baltic / Nordic area in Russia and Europe. The Emerging Security Agenda*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. p. 342.

the Barents region represented a change in Norwegian foreign policy towards Russia. The actual exclusion is aimed at avoiding any kind of interference with delimitation talks and, possibly, offering an incentive to the Russians to reach an agreement.

4.1 Cooperation in the environment field

Environment is the prime field for cooperation in the Barents framework. This cannot be dissociated from four main factors. First, the nuclear activities in the Kola Peninsula and the Pechenga complex are *inter alia* serious sources of radioactivity and pollution that can easily reach the Nordic countries. Second, Nordic societies are the most environmental concerned in Europe. Thus, green politics are to some extent important driving-forces behind the Nordic states' foreign policy. Third, radioactive concentrations in water masses and fish in the Barents Sea could threaten the market profile of fisheries' products, one of the major sources of revenue in the region. Fourth, it was easier for Russia to accept to cooperate to solve environmental problems provided two conditions: the net funds-receiver character of Russia in this field on the one hand and Nordic economic assistance in the restructuration and development of Northwestern Russian economy on the other²⁷.

That the environment is the prime field was shown by the fact that the first Post-Cold War meeting between those countries brought together the Ministers of Environment in Kirkenes on 3-4 September 1992. Further, it was the first time that those countries met to discuss the Barents region at ministerial level. Without going into too much detail, the joint declaration adopted there laid down the basic principles of environmental politics in the region. The actors may in no way neglect environment problems. In short, both terrestrial and marine ecosystems are rather simple, implying that the disruption of one link of the food chain may severely affect the rest of the system. This makes the environment in the Barents region very vulnerable to human pressure²⁸. Let us look more closely at the most critical environmental dangers to the region.

First, the most serious environmental hazard stems from the extensive nuclear activity of the Russian Northern Fleet. Nowhere else on Earth is there such a concentration of military and civilian nuclear reactors²⁹. The main source of radioactive contamination is the comprehensive Russian dumping of radioactive waste in the Barents and Kara Seas. A Bellona report notes that since 1960 the Russian Northern Fleet has dumped 16 nuclear reactors (6 of them containing fuel), 16 ships and 6,508 containers of solid radioactive waste and 192,700 m³ of liquid radioactive waste in the Kara Sea³⁰. While the deliberate dumping of reactors and solid waste has been suspended, low-level radioactive liquid is still being dumped. Finally, 88 nuclear power submarines have been taken out of service and are dry-docked³¹.

27. This last factor is recognised by Per Antonsen. ANTONSEN, *op. cit.*

28. EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY. *The State of the European Arctic Environment*. Copenhagen: Environmental Monograph No. 3, 1996.

29. The Russian Northern Fleet accounts for 18% of the world's total nuclear reactors. In particular, the Russian Northern Fleet had 67 nuclear submarines in service in 1996. There is a total of 1225 operating nuclear reactors in the world. T. NILSEN, I. KUDRIK & A. NIKITIN, *op. cit.*

A second nuclear risk in the Barents region refers to the Kola nuclear power plant of Polyarnye Zori whose nuclear reactors have recently had operational problems³². The third source of radioactive contamination in the region comes from nuclear tests, Novaya Zemlya being one of the two major fields for nuclear test explosions in the former Soviet Union. However it has not been used since the demise of the Soviet Union. In total, 86 nuclear test explosions were detonated in the atmosphere, 43 underground and 6 underwater in Novaya Zemlya³³.

Second, the smelterworks extraction and processing industry in the border area between Norway and Russia causes negative external effects in the form of emissions of SO² (sulphurdioxide), dust containing heavy metals (copper, cobalt) and mud/tailings. The emissions on the Russian side of the Pechenga region are considerably higher than those coming from the Norwegian side. Remote sensing has shown seriously damaged vegetation and environmental deterioration over 329 km² around these two plants. Pronounced effects on the vegetation are observed over an area of 4,400 km²³⁴.

Third, we should take account of the marine pollution whose main sources are the large and heavily industrialised centres on the banks of the Russian Ob, Yenisei and Lena Rivers³⁵.

The most important asset of the Barents framework in this field is the Barents Region Environmental Action programme (BREAP). This programme joins a variety of international, national and regional organisations working with Arctic environmental issues³⁶. The Ministers of the Environment adopted this programme in the meeting of the BEARC in Bodø in 1994³⁷. BREAP is aimed at protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development. Moreover a Joint Task Force has been established to prepare selected projects in areas that, to date, are not covered by other cooperation framework in the Barents region, i.e. prevention of radioactive pollution and preparedness for nuclear accidents, reduction of pollution from industrial activities, etc.

Though the areas covered by BREAP are of importance, we should however pose the question of the relevance of BREAP in a region largely covered by environmental programmes. We must not lose sight of the fundamental difference between the Barents strategy and the wider environmental strategy adopted in Rovaniemi (AEPS) and subsequently taken up by the Arctic Council in 1996. This difference refers to one of the principles set by the

30. The Yablokov Reports gives the same figures. In all, Russia has dumped between 115,000 Tbq (3.1 million) and 333,000 Tbq (9 million Ci) at sea. In comparison, all other countries put together have dumped 46,000 Tbq (1.24 million Ci) during the period 1946 - 1982. Thomas NILSEN & Nils BØHMER. *Source to radioactive contamination in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk counties*. Oslo: Bellona Report Volume 1, 1994.

31. T. NILSEN, I. KUDRIK & A. NIKITIN, op.cit.

32. *The state of the European Arctic environment*, op.cit.

33. T. NILSEN & N. BØHMER, op. cit.

34. *The state of the European Arctic environment*, op.cit.

35. In particular, the nuclear chemical installations in Majak, Tomsk, Kraasnoyarsk, Zhelez-nogorsk and Seversk represent a potential threat of increased radioactive contamination in the Barents and Kara Seas through the above-mentioned rivers. Most of these combines appeared in the beginning of the 50' in order to proceed with large scale Soviet production of plutonium and uranium for use in nuclear weapons. Nils BØHMER & Thomas NILSEN. *Reprocessing plants in Siberia*. Oslo: Bellona Working Paper No. 4: 1995

above-mentioned Joint Declaration of 1992 and reaffirmed by the Kirkenes Declaration: the integration of the environmental dimension into all economic activities in the region. This is a central idea in the founding concept for cooperation in the Barents region. Further this principle is a means to reach sustainable development in the region³⁸. Proof of the relevance of this principle is the fact that later in 1996, the Arctic Council would follow the Barents' policy makers in this respect and reformulate the AEPS in order to achieve, at the same time, environmental protection and economic development.

Second, the Barents framework constitutes a 'clearing house' for direct dialogue between the environmentally damaged Nordic countries and Russia, source of the gravest environmental concerns. Given that Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia are all part of the other wider frameworks and taking into account that they are the most directly concerned by the environmental hazards, it seems to me that the annual sessions of the BEARC could constitute: a) the perfect opportunity for the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Environment to assess the work done by the different institutions dealing with environmental problems in Barents. b) These meetings could put some order in the complex framework of multilateral, bilateral, trilateral and national institutions working in this field in order to avoid repetition.

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36. A variety of international, national and regional organisations work with Arctic environmental issues. These constitute an important framework for cooperation, coordination and implementation of Arctic research and development projects. *Multilateral*. 1. The Rovaniemi Declaration on the protection of the Arctic Environment June 14, 1991 by which the eight Arctic countries adopted an action plan called the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS). The strategy sets as its objectives to protect the Arctic Environment, ensure a careful utilisation of natural resources, accommodate the needs of indigenous peoples and to abate pollution. 2. Declaration on establishing the Arctic Council on September 19, 1996, the same eight circumpolar states signed a Declaration creating the Arctic Council, a consensus forum to *provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states and Arctic peoples*. The Arctic Council constitutes a challenge since it absorbs the environmental conservation elements of the AEPS and combines them with broader issues related to sustainable development. *Bilateral*. A bilateral environmental protection agreement between Norway and Russia was signed in Kirkenes on 3rd September 1992. Collaboration is carried out by a mixed Norwegian-Russian commission that meets yearly. The modernisation of the Pechenga complex nickel works and questions of radioactive pollution are dealt with within this mechanism. *National*. 1. A Norwegian assistance programme for nuclear safety addresses since 1994 unsatisfactory safety measures at nuclear facilities, unsatisfactory management and storage of nuclear waste, dumping of nuclear waste and weapons-related environmental hazards. 2. The national programmes for action for Central and Eastern Europe. Every Nordic country has a programme for action in Central and Eastern Europe whose primary goal is to contribute to ensure democratically and economically sustainable development in the reform countries. Developing democracy, environmental protection, business cooperation and infrastructure are the main areas of concentration of the programme. *Trilateral*. USA, Russia and Norway. The Russian-Norwegian-American cooperation has focused on the expansion and upgrading of the treatment facility for low-level liquid radioactive waste in Murmansk, Russia.
37. *The Barents Euro-Arctic Council Environment Action Programme*. Bodo, Norway: 15th June 1994.
38. The Brundtland Commission defines sustainable development as *the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*; quoted by Håken R. NILSON in *Environmental factors in multilateral cooperation in Dreaming of the Barents Region*. KÄKÖNEN, J. Tampere: TAPRI Research Report. No. 73, 1996.

c) CSO and BEARC meetings could constitute a forum for reflection on the search for the best-suited framework to deal with specific problems. It follows that more cooperation, coordination and consultation within the Barents framework could strongly push the interests of the Barents actors within wider frameworks as the Arctic Council.

4.2 Cooperation in the economic field

The Kirkenes Declaration recognised the importance of increased economic cooperation in the Barents region. Later, the participants underlined their aim at transforming the region into an important area of sustainable economic growth through enhanced political and economic cooperation³⁹. We concur with Nilson in that the participants attempt to develop some kind of integrated economic region⁴⁰. We think that the aim would be to transform the four national peripheries into a West-East horizontally integrated regional economy. This functional economic region would be linked to Europe through the membership of Sweden and Finland in the European Union.

As to the economic structure of the Barents region, it centres on raw material extraction and processing. It constitutes an important 'supplier actor' of energy resources to the southern markets. Fishing, forestry, oil, gas, and mineral resources are vital for the future of the northern provinces⁴¹. Barents displays at present a 90%-export rate, which is vulnerable to fluctuations in international prices and demand. Regional and domestic markets have so far been insignificant⁴². Third, the border between the Nordic countries and Russia represents an important boundary for economic and social differences in the level of incomes, prices, wages, technology, and in the functioning of the market system.

The Russian side of the region is involved in a difficult process of economic restructuring from a command economy to a market economy. In particular, Russians have to dismantle and split up the huge military-industrial complex in the Kola Peninsula. On the other hand, the Russian part and the Barents Sea contain large unexploited resources. In these conditions, Nordic countries are key actors at transferring information for the restructuring of many large Russian enterprises into smaller and flexible independent units that adjust effectively to a market economy⁴³. Further, Nordic countries may train Russian managers in how to operate under free market conditions. Western companies could provide technology and know-how to their local part-

39. *Joint Statement from the Barents Euro-Arctic Council*. Tromsø, Norway: Second Session. 14th-15th September 1995.

40. H. NILSON, *op. cit.*

41. In particular, oil and gas reserves of the Arkhangelsk Oblast/Nenets Autonomous region are: 2449.6 of oil/in place million tons, 840.4 of oil/recoverable million tons and 458.9 of natural gas billion m³. Total recoverable reserves in the Russian part of the Barents Sea are estimated at approximately 3 billion tons of oil. Shtokmanovskoye gas field in the Barents Sea contains 2500 billion m³ of gas, making it the biggest gas field in the world. The total gas reserves of the Barents Sea could be as big as 10 trillion m³. Productive forests cover the 50 % of the total land area of the Russian side. The Russian Federation receives 99% of ceramic pegmalites, 88% of phosphates, 78% of micas and a significant portion of copper, nickel, cobalt, rare metals, bauxite, as well as hydraulic cement from the Barents Region V. NYGAARD, *op. cit.*

42. Svein RANDA. *The Barents Region in an EC context*. Oslo: Center for European Studies, Working Paper 1993/10.

ners. Nordic oil companies may provide expertise and capital to the Russian oil and gas industry. Finally, financing is another key asset of the Nordic side in its economic collaboration with the Russians, especially energy projects.

The Barents Programme is the first achievement of the recently established cooperation. The Secretariat in Kirkenes formulated this programme in 1994 following the recommendations from the BEARC and the RC. The structure, aims, strategies and priorities were approved by the RC in September 1995 and ratified by the BEARC later⁴⁴ with a total sum for project proposals for 1996 amounting to ECU 10 million. The main aim of this *wishing list*⁴⁵ is to stimulate regional cooperation within selected fields in order to contribute to a better economic and social development, and create a common identity⁴⁶. Furthermore, it has been formulated as an economic framework specifically aimed at the Russian part of the region. The main problem of the Barents economic program is that its implementation depends on the funding availability of the regional constituents of the Barents region, and this factor is not granted⁴⁷.

We should say a few words about the economic contribution of the European Union to the Barents framework. When Sweden and Finland joined the EU, Community structural funds became available for the regional development of their northern. In May 1995, the Norwegian government, upon invitation from Finland and Sweden, decided to participate in the EU programme INTERREG for the Barents region. This programme aims at developing cross-border cooperation and assisting both internal and external border areas of the Union. The present programme for this region has been drawn up for the period 1995-1999. The total investment was forecast at ECU 110 million⁴⁸. Finally, there will be a possibility of financing projects on the Russian side through the TACIS programme⁴⁹.

4.3 Other important fields of cooperation

It is said that cooperation in the cultural field, followed by emphasis on infrastructure, is the first natural step in the formation of a new region. As the former Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Johan Joørgen Holst highlighted *cultural cooperation as a very important element in order to develop a regional identity and to foster an understanding of the importance of the cooperation in the region*⁵⁰. The yearly meetings of the Ministers of Education and Science have so far focused on youth exchanges, scientific cooperation, particularly in facilitating studies in regional history, economics and culture, teaching

43. Lars Karlberg points out that “*Swedish expertise at dismantling giant companies could be a valuable asset in the conversion of the military-industrial complex in a civilian industry*” KARLBERG, op.cit.

44. *Joint Declaration from the Barents Euro-Arctic Council*. Rovaniemi, Finland: Third session. 10th October 1995.

45. Mr. Karlberg refers to the Barents program as a wishing list, an indicative list of hopes. Personal interview with Mr. Lars Karlberg, Director of International Coordination at the County administration of Västerbotten, 10/11/1998, Umeå, Sweden

46. *The Barents Programme 1994*. Kirkenes, Norway: Barentssekretariatet, 1994.

47. The county of Västerbotten was allocated 1.5 million Crones for regional development within the Barents framework in 1998. L. KARLBERG, op. cit.

48. REUTERS, 15/8/1995.

49. At this point, it is necessary to remember that Northwestern Russia had been granted ECU 78 million via TACIS in 1990-1993. REUTERS 27/10/1994.

50. Reykjavik: The Nordic Council Arctic Conference, 16-17 August 1993.

languages of the region, improvement of ecological education, as well as developing cultural contacts of the indigenous peoples in the North.

Finally, there can be no doubt that a good network for transport and communications is an essential prerequisite for personal, economic and commercial contacts as well as for a positive regional development. First, transport to the main markets in Central Europe, Western Europe and Russia is a critical factor for the profitability of industries in a 90%-export rate and peripheral region. Further, an integrated economic region can only be achieved if a satisfactory infrastructure exists. However, East-West links across national borders are not satisfactory and, in some cases, non-existent. Thus, since the first meeting of Ministers of transport and communications the great challenge has been to add an East-West connection system to the four national North-South network on the one hand, and convenient connection between the region itself and the European and Russian markets on the other hand. Thus the Working Group on economic cooperation of the BEARC has focused its work on the fourth of its seven objectives, that is to say, *to place particular emphasis on identifying obstacles to cooperation in the region and launch recommendations on possible measures to improve transport and telecommunications in the area*⁵¹.

51. Personal interview with Ambassador Jan Kronholm, chairman of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's Working Group on Economic Cooperation. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. 13/5/97, Stockholm.

5 The Barents initiative as a security strategy

In the following pages, we are going to determine what kind of security project the Barents framework is on the one hand and the effects of the ongoing cooperation in the perception of threats of the actors on the other. To that purpose, we will begin with a brief background description of the political and military changes in the last decades and the subsequent consequences for the security agenda in Europe. We will later address the issue of the geostrategic importance of the region and its extreme geopolitical complexity. We will point out the interests feeding the involvement of the actors and their new security policies after the end of the Cold War. We will use these analytical tools in order to understand the security compound of the Barents Region in the final part of this paper.

5.1 Political and military challenges in the 90 s and the new security agenda

The military and ideological competition that so much embittered East-West relations was gone after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Today, 1998, there is only one political-military superpower, the USA. The former Soviet Union has been reorganised into 15 newly independent states (NIS). One of the two dominant military alliances of the past, the Warsaw Pact, has withered away. Meanwhile NATO assumes collective security-oriented tasks and promotes stability throughout Central and Eastern Europe. A number of regional and local conflicts that were frozen during the Cold War have now made their way to the political surface, as demonstrated by the well-known Bosnian War, the Caucasus flashpoints and the Kosovo conflict. Predictability and stability in the bipolar World has been replaced by unpredictability, uncertainty, and internal and regional located conflict. All this is going on within a world structured in three economic blocs— the USA-led NAFTA, the EU, and the Japanese-led bloc. Further we are closing the industrial society chapter and getting into the multimedia and information society, reaching a global and interdependent economy.

The end of the Cold War has meant a huge reduction in all categories of weapons. Arms control agreements and unilateral reductions have been agreed upon since 1987. The START I agreement of July 1991, the Bush-Gorbachev reciprocal unilateral initiatives on tactical and strategic systems later, and the START II of January 1993 have mandated cuts in USA/USSR (Russia) strategic and tactical nuclear forces in the order of 70% of their previous totals by the year 2003. Major reductions in conventional armaments in Europe were agreed upon under the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty signed in 1990.

The geopolitical earthquake of the late 80's and early 90's was to challenge the premises of the old security agenda. In a couple of words, Barry Buzan defined the old security agenda through the four meaningful compounds: balance of power, alliances, security and sovereignty⁵². There was no alternative but to reexamine and reassess the old assumptions.

First, the end of the Cold War permitted new problems to surface and to be perceived as important parts in the matrix of concerns of the governments. Until recently, security was identified with hard security. Its departure point was that insecurity was derived from a set of military threats and vulnerabilities⁵³. The end of the Cold War left room for other non-military sets of threats to the state's security. Today there is some room in the spectrum of national concerns for environmental pollution, migration, refugees and border control, terrorism, etc. That was traditionally called soft security. In this sense, the Brundtland Commission, headed by Willy Brandt, Gro Harlem Brundtland and Julius Nyerere, launched the idea of *comprehensive security*.

Second, it is clear that the improvement of the political conditions favoured higher levels of cooperation between states. What does cooperation mean vis-à-vis security perceptions? As mentioned earlier, we should assume that contacts, solving common problems through collaboration and exchanging ideas would have a more than positive effect by enhancing trust and mutual understanding between states and peoples of different cultures. Mutual trust and understanding normally lead to enhanced feelings of security among the actors. The concept of *cooperative security* was launched later in order to grasp this reality. Sverre Jervell⁵⁴ emphasises this in a remarkable article, *cooperative security means that implied by a network of cooperative relations, in others words, security based on low-level politics*⁵⁵. The idea is that the concept of cooperative security has come resulted from the fact that security policy has acquired strong political, economic and environmental overtones in addition to its military compound. In conclusion, cooperative security would be a direct and natural development of the concept of comprehensive security.

Third, whereas in conditions of East-West rivalry global security requirements took precedence over the individual aspirations of regional countries for local security arrangements, the disappearance of global rivalry opens the way to a reappraisal of the opportunities for *regional security arrangements*.

Fourth, all these perspectives lead to another important challenge to national politics and to the security concept, namely *the decentralisation of foreign and security policy exercise*. The end of a divided Europe means that the absolute harmony within the state is no longer a *must* in the sense that the *minor* interests of the different entities within the state are not longer neglected vis-à-vis the highest and supreme interest of the central state. The end of the East-West rivalry leaves more room for the dispersion of political authority to more and more levels. Foreign and security policy becomes more democratically rooted.

Thus regions at trans-state level become relevant entities in this new security agenda. It has been pointed out that regionality has various effects that lead to improved security perceptions by the actors. First, regionality tends

52. Barry BUZAN & Ole WÆVER. *Framing Nordic Security: European Scenarios for the 90' and beyond in Nordic Security in the 90 . Options in the changing Europe*. London: TFF, 1992.

53. B. BUZAN. *People, States and Fear*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, Second Edition. 1991. op.cit.p. 112.

54. According to Dr. Knudssen, Sverre Jervell was the real thinking-tank behind the Stoltenberg Initiative. Personal Interview with Dr. Olav F. Knudsen, Director of research. Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. 6/4/97,Oslo.

55. Sverre JERVELL. *The Barents Cooperation Initiative: Security in Northern Europe after the Cold War in Common Security in Northern Europe after the Cold War*. Stockholm: Olof Palme International Center, 1994.

towards inclusion rather than exclusion. Further, it could provide a valuable opportunity to respond to specific needs in a more effective way than state-to-state cooperation. Second, regionality seems mostly to contribute to a reduction of historical and territorial quarrels. Instead of increased polarising, it draws attention to common experiences, real or imagined, thereby contributing to the communicative capacities of the societies in question⁵⁶. That is the reason why the Barents actors often recall the Pomor period in order to foster the common identity of the region. Economic cooperation, interdependence and human relations influence ways of thinking towards neighbours, replacing animosity with positive human contacts. We could say that a regional cooperation framework is more effective and suitable than state ones in economic and social issues, while military concerns have to be dealt with at national and international levels. Today we may distinguish an arrow of regional-building along the former Iron Curtain, which includes the Barents Sea region, the Baltic Sea region, the new Euro-region, the Alps-Adria region, the Central European Initiative and the Black Sea region.

To sum up, the central state is no longer the only actor in security matters. Neither are military concerns the only objects of the security concept. Instead new objects and new subjects will work in the *modus operandi* of the policymakers. All this goes to illustrate an integrative security concept, according to Barry Buzan⁵⁷. The author emphasises that “*the concept of security binds together these levels (state, individual, regional and system) and sectors (political, military, societal, economic and environmental) so closely that it demands to be treated in an integrative perspective*”. This multidimensional approach to security is ratified by the Budapest Document from the Summit of Heads of States of the OSCE on 5-6 December 1994 in Budapest. The document, *Towards a genuine Partnership in a new era*, aims at establishing a common security space for the OSCE region based on comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible security⁵⁸.

5.2 Other analytical tools

5.2.1 *The strategic importance of the European High North*

Once subjected to the USA-USSR rivalry after the end of the WW II, the Barents region was to become one of the key areas in this struggle. On the Soviet side, the North-western corner of Russia became one of the most heavily militarised regions in the former USSR, since the Kola Peninsula was the home of its most powerful naval force, the Northern Fleet. This included the large part of the Soviet strategic nuclear submarine fleet⁵⁹. On the Western side, North Atlantic Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) were essential for an USA military operation to assist its European partners as required. NATO placed a great deal of importance upon the forward deployment of American SSNs submarines in the Arctic region, their mission being to destroy as many Russian SSBNs submarines as possible in the early phase of any conflict.

The interaction of the Soviet strategy with the NATO line of action created an extremely dangerous and unstable situation in the European High

56. Pertti JOENNNIEMI. *Region-building as Europe-building in the Barents Region in The Barents Region*. London: SAGE Publications, 1994.

57. B. BUZAN, op.cit, p.363.

58. Internet <http://www.osceprag.cz/doi/chronos.htm>

North. Thus this part of the Arctic was gradually transformed from a military *vacuum* prior to the WW II to a military flank in the period 1950-70, and to a military front in the 80's. After the end of the Cold War we have experienced relaxation in military tension in the region. However, we could note a relevant continuity as to the military importance of the region for Russian security thinking⁶⁰. First, the military significance of the Barents Sea as a base for Russian naval operations has actually increased since Russia lost its important naval facilities in the Baltic and Black Seas. Second, the arms control process increases the military significance of the North for Russia⁶¹. Third, once Russia lost its buffer borderland in Central Europe and its geo-strategic situation changed, the Kola Peninsula has become an important key axis for the defence of the country⁶². Finally, the importance of the region from an energy-strategic point of view is indisputable. All these factors could lead to the conclusion that the Kola Peninsula is even more important to Russia than it was for the former Soviet Union.

5.2.2 *The geopolitical structure of the region*

The European High North space is a very complex region due to the following realities. First, it contains the Nordic security community, in which disputes among all the members are resolved to such an extent that none of them fears, or prepares for, either political assault or military attack from any of the others⁶³. Second, we think that the region is part of the regional security *subcomplex* of Northern Europe (Norway, NATO member; Sweden and Finland, non aligned-neutrals; Baltic countries, USA partners and Russia)⁶⁴. Third, while recognising the existence of a regional security subcomplex in Northern Europe because of the special dynamic in this part of Europe, one must also agree that structures and policies in a wider European context affect security in Northern Europe. The European High North is part of the EU-led political and economic integration process (Sweden and Finland as members, Norway as member of the EEA and Russia as partner). Fourth,

59. It would be naïve to consider that this concentration of armed forces had to do with the military capabilities of its Nordic neighbours. Instead, this situation was due to several factors: first of all, Murmansk and other ports along the Kola peninsula were ice free all year and offered easy access to the North Atlantic. Second, the nearby Arctic Ocean also offered an attractive staging ground for the operation of the Soviet nuclear-powered ballistic missiles submarines (SSBNs). The thick ice pack that covers most of the Arctic Ocean and the irregular underside of the ice pack create ideal conditions for SSBNs to hide from potential attackers, both USA aircraft and nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSN).

60. Personal interview with O. Røeggen, Adviser at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Norway, 5/4/97, Oslo.

61. Under the STARTS agreements Russia should eliminate the greater part of its intercontinental ballistic missiles. The role of airborne and sea-based missiles will therefore be enhanced. It is the Kola Peninsula and White Sea Coast that have the biggest submarine bases in Russia. Moreover the CFE Treaty has prompted a quantitative and qualitative increase in the Russian military strength of the Leningrad Military District of which the Kola Peninsula is a part. This arises from the transfer of more modern military equipment from Central Europe Peter GIZEWSKI. *Arctic Security after the Than: a Post-Cold War Reassessment*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Global Security, 1993.

62. Lena JONSON. *Russian Policy in Northern Europe in Russia and Europe. The Emerging Security Agenda*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. p.311.

63. B. BUZAN, op. cit. p.218.

the Barents Euro-Arctic and the Baltic regional frameworks bear testimony to the fact that the regional-building process is very present in Northern Europe. Fifth, a security triangle has inscribed Nordic geopolitics for the last two centuries⁶⁵. Foreign policy has been decided by developments in England (USA later), continental Europe (European Union later), and Russia; and by the relationship of each Nordic country to this triangle. As a result, the Nordic countries have always been interested in contributing to the improvement of relations between the three corners of this power triangle.

5.2.3 *Main motivation factors feeding the different states to constitute the Barents Euro-Arctic Region*

The Nordic countries: Despite the fact that every country has its own interests in this regional framework, the three Nordic states have a large set of common interests. They refer to two types of dynamics: foreign policy dynamics and the domestic dynamics. As to the former, the Barents region is born in a moment when the role of the three Nordic states in the new Post-Cold War world is quite uncertain. After the end of the cold war, Norway had to face a very difficult dilemma. The Norwegian maritime role in NATO as only front line state (with Turkey) in the Barents Sea and guarantor of Nato's sea lines of communications through the Atlantic was downgraded by an organisation that seemed to wither away. The lack of European tradition in Norway made fast integration into the EU unforeseeable. In this way, given an extreme scenario, Norway could have been left alone in an eventual confrontation with a weaker but not less dangerous Russia⁶⁶. Moreover, Norway also felt marginalised in the Baltic regional framework where Denmark and Sweden led the

64. Barry Buzan defines a *security complex* as a group of states whose primary security concerns link together so closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered separate from one another. B. BUZAN, op. cit. p. 218. Barry Buzan states that “*there is a European security complex but not a Nordic one*”. He says, “*Europe is in security terms a natural unit*”. Thus, “*the most important framework for analysing Nordic security is the dynamic of the region in which it is located: Europe*”. B. BUZAN & O. WÆVER, op. cit, p.85. It is true that the USA-USSR dynamic was so intense during the Cold War that the local pattern of security relations virtually ceased to operate in the region. This factor, (that Buzan calls *overlay*) prevented from any local security complex in the region. However the situation has changed after the end of the Cold War. K. MÖTTÖLÄ considers that Northern Europe constitutes a security complex since most of the Nordic and Baltic concerns has Russian origin Kari MÖTTÖLÄ. *Security in Northern Europe - combining and reinforcing national, regional and wider European policies in Visions of European Security - Focal point Sweden and Northern Europe*. Stockholm: Olof Palme International Center, 1996. We do not go so far as K. Mottola does as to call Northern Europe a security complex and prefer to use the term *security subcomplex*. We mean by this term that though most of the security concerns of the Baltic countries and Nordic states have their origin in Russia, security in this part of the world is also affected by political, military and economic developments in Europe. In my opinion, it is necessary to recognise the specific security relations in Northern Europe. In support of this view, may I refer to the particular *cooperative* connotation that Russia's security policy acquires when referred to the Nordic countries. On the other hand, the presence of the American superpower is quickly diminishing in the region. This is a middle position between the Mottola' stance and that held by Barry Buzan.

65. Iver B. NEUMANN. *Nordic Security Cooperation in Homogenized Political Setting*. Stockholm: SIIA, Cooperation and Conflict. Volume 31. Number 4. December 1996.

66. In fact, Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland said before the last referendum that rejection of EU membership could leave Oslo isolated in Western European defence matters. REUTERS. 31/8/94.

game. Its international surroundings obliged Norway to take the initiative in order to maintain its influence in international politics⁶⁷.

Sweden's neutrality had lost, to some extent, its meaning and its new role in international politics was quite uncertain. The Baltic Sea framework and, to less extent, the Barents attempt were used to jump this impasse, in addition to the main move of its foreign policy during the 90's: its integration into the EU.

Finally Finland was no longer the privileged political and economic partner of Russia. An era of prosperity reached its end and Finland had to define its new role in international politics. Although Finland unilaterally changed the contents of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of 1948 and showed that its foreign policy was becoming more independent, the 1,270 km long common border with Russia did not disappear with the fall of the Iron Curtain. Rather this long border is likely to have a very strong influence on any Finnish foreign policy measure. Thus Finland attempts to profit of its expertise in economic relations with Russia and become once again the privileged gateway for Russian exchanges although in terms different to those during the Cold War. Further, the country hopes to be an EU gateway to Russia, a potentially huge market for western goods⁶⁸.

On the other hand, the Nordic countries are interested in keeping Russia as stable as possible. At this point, it is necessary to bear in mind the geographical proximity of the Kola Peninsula arsenal to the Nordic territory. Finally, the traditionally green Nordic countries are very concerned with the deterioration of the environmental situation in the Barents Sea and the Kola Peninsula.

Regarding domestic dynamics, the northernmost counties of the Nordic countries have been net transfers receivers for the past three decades. The BEAR is aimed at reducing the strong economic marginality and financial dependence of all involved provinces by the creation of a successful functional horizontal economy. Thus, the economic restructuring of Northwest Russia is in Nordic interests⁶⁹. On the other hand, in the early 90's, people in the Arctic had begun to organise themselves as international actors and were putting the national government in a defensive position⁷⁰. The Barents project may be seen as a counter-strategy of the Nordic states to cope with the threat of the rising civil society's role in politics in the North. It is an attempt by the national state to restructure and control the ongoing activities in the North⁷¹.

The Russian federation: The BEAR within Russian foreign policy has been represented by Andrew Kozyrev, former Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, as *a development of Russian national interests in foreign policy, security, economy, ecology*

67. At this point, Dr. Olav F. Knudsen thinks that the Barents Region is a political project of the Labour Party to establish a great role for Norway in the High North. The Norwegian government needed some kind of initiative in order to reestablish the importance of the region. At the same time, the Barents region answered the critics from the opposition parties to the Norwegian lack of attention to the High North. KNUDSEN, op.cit.

68. Former Finnish Prime Minister Esko Aho stated *Finnish EU membership was a great challenge for Finland and Russia because Finland had big resources to develop cooperation over the borders*. REUTERS. 14/10/94.

69. KARLBERG, op.cit.

70. Idem.

71. Bo EVENSSON, op. cit.

and the social sphere, while also focusing on the specific interests and local needs of Russian North-western regions⁷². Out of these vague considerations, we could highlight the following Russian targets in the Barents framework.

First, the Barents mechanism constitutes a direct channel for Russian political dialogue with the West. In the Baltic Sea region the relationship between the West and Russia is bound to be influenced by the state of bilateral relations between Russia and the Baltic States. The Barents framework, however, constitutes a direct channel for political dialogue between Russia on the one side and the Nordic Countries (European Union to some extent) on the other.

Second, after the collapse of the Soviet Empire, Russia lost direct access to Central and Western Europe. Numerous barriers (organised crime, lack of coordination between the Customs services of the different countries) prevent Russian normal communications through Belarus and Ukraine to the main Western markets. The Russians are well aware of Finnish and Swedish EU membership and Norwegian membership in the EEA. The Barents region could constitute an economic window for Russia to western markets.

Third, the economic development of the Russian High North is of vital interest for Russian economy due to the importance of the industrial complex of the Kola Peninsula, the raw material potential as well as the oil and gas sectors. Development of these resources is a priority of the government since oil and gas are essential sources of hard currency earnings for the budget. Russia looks at the Nordic countries as a possible source of capital, venture, scientific and technological knowledge. These factors are essential to insure the economic development of the region in order to carry out the restructuration of the economic-military complex and developing potential sources of economic growth in Northwest Russia. Although the Nordic countries do not have the huge amount of capital needed in order to meet the needs, they may constitute a bridge between the West, rich in capital, and Russia⁷³.

The European Union as a genuine member of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council: As a result of the applications for membership from Sweden, Norway and Finland in the beginning of the 90's, the EU realised that it had to cultivate its northern flank. First, the accession of Finland and Sweden gave the EU a large common border with the Russian Federation. Thus, *the accession of those countries has introduced a new Northern dimension into the European Union*⁷⁴. This common border with its attendant challenges, risks and opportunities marks a significant change in relation to the past⁷⁵. What is more important, the EU shares a common interest with the Nordic countries in promoting stability in Russia.

72. A. KOZYREV. *Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region: Promising beginning*, in *The Barents Region*. London: SAGE Publications, 1994.

73. Käkönen suggests that the Kola Peninsula is much more important to overall Russian development than it was to Soviet development due to the above-mentioned factors and the fact that Russia lost most of its rich in resources territories in the south. Jyrki KÄKÖNEN. *Politics and Security in the Barents Sea Region in The Barents Region*. Umeå, Sweden : CERUM, 1994.

74. *Opinion on the Northern Dimension of the European Union and cross-border cooperation on the border between the European Union and the Russian Federation* adopted by the Committee of the Regions on 12th June 1996.

75. The Finnish - Russian border equals the distance between Frankfurt and Madrid.

Second, the access to the vast resources of the Barents region has been very present in the EU decisionmakers' minds. In fact, energy supply from the Russian High North is considered to be very important in the EU energy policy. It could make EU decision centres more independent from the United States and the permanent instability in the Middle East and North Africa.

Third, regionalisation in adjacent areas may offer an opportunity to expand the EU's influence at low cost. In fact, EU strategy vis-à-vis Central and Eastern Europe has been characterised by a regional approach and conditionality clauses. Before acceptance to the EU framework, candidates must engage in regional cooperation with neighbouring countries and observe international principles of behaviour. Proof of this is the political dialogue that the three Baltic States carry out within the Baltic Council⁷⁶ and the Central European Free Trade Area. The latter is the most important achievement of the Visegrad cooperation group, which was founded by the Central European candidates under EU pressure. In Northern Europe, the Baltic Sea and the Barents regional frameworks have had a significant financial and political support from the EU. We have to bear in mind that it is cheaper to support regional-building in Northern Europe than integrate those countries in the European economic framework. A rapid integration would entail that the economic, social, inter-ethnic and inter-state borders problems that Central and Eastern European countries often have would become problems of the EU. No doubt that this strategy responds as well to the desire of the 15 European partners to delay as long as possible inclusion of this region. This desire is due to its economic costs and other internal dynamics. The EU does not want to divert attention from the most important challenges that it faces in the end of this century: the success of the Economic and Monetary Union process. Furthermore, the institutional reform that it is absolutely necessary before any enlargement process does not seem to be easy to reach.

However, despite the importance of those interests, we could say that EU involvement in the Barents mechanism has thus far been very weak. It is noticeable that there is not a single unit in the European Commission for the Barents region⁷⁷. High-level civil servants in the Norwegian Ministry of Environment complained about the lack of interest from the European Commission. In their opinion, this is due to the lack of initiative from the EU representatives that attend the BEARC sessions. Moreover, there is not permanent ambassador to the BEARC. Consequently, different people come to each meeting⁷⁸.

Denmark and Iceland: These countries are members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council but not of the Regional Council. Norway wanted to include as many countries outside the region as possible in order to balance its Eastern neighbour in a multilateral framework. Thus, former Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Stoltenberg managed to internationalise this cooperation framework by extending it to the other two Nordic countries and the EU⁷⁹.

76. It is necessary not to confuse the Baltic Council with the Baltic Sea Council, the latter being made up by the three Baltic countries, Russia, Poland, Germany, Finland, the three Scandinavian countries and the EU.

77. Let us point out that the European Commission keeps a special unit for Poland and the Baltic States within the DGIA.

78. ANTONSEN, op.cit.

79. KARLBERG, op.cit.

Denmark has a substantial link to the Arctic region through its privileged relationship with Greenland, and Iceland is an Arctic country. As for the EU, Denmark and Iceland, it is necessary to point out that they cannot hold the chairmanship of BEARC and their participation is excluded at the regional level. Finally, there are other countries that have the status of observers in the Barents framework: USA, Japan, Germany, France, UK, Canada, Poland and Netherlands.

5.2.4 *The legacy of the past and the new security policies of the Barents actors*

Though the Nordic countries varied in their security policies during the Cold War, there were still common elements. There was a conscious attempt to ensure that their security policies did not contribute to East-West tension, and that they certainly did not undermine the policies of the other Nordic countries. As to Sweden, we have to bear in mind that neutrality has been the traditional code in its traditional security-thinking after 1814. Security thinking was first of all determined by the balancing between West and East during the Cold War. Sweden focused on an alliance-free policy where an active foreign policy and a credible national defence capability were the essential means.

No doubt that the sea is the source of Norwegian prosperity⁸⁰. First of all, gas, oil and fishing industries constitute very important inputs of revenue for the national economy. Secondly, but not less important, the sea has forged the strategic importance of the country throughout its history. Thus, Norway has controlled the passage from the Baltic Sea to the North Sea through the Skagerrak Strait and the passage from the Barents Sea to the North Sea through the North Cape. After the German violation of its neutrality during the WW II, the security policy of the country was based on the Atlantic link. Norway would be a key actor in the USA-USSR chessboard as the only Nato front line State (with Turkey) and guarantor of Nato's sea lines of communications.

The Finnish geopolitical position between the Scandinavian, German and Russian worlds has determined its security policy and role in the international arena throughout history. The dependence on Russian politics has determined Finnish security thinking for the present century and especially during the Cold War. In this way, Finland had to withstand constant Russian aggressions to its territorial integrity after its independence from Russia in 1917. As a result, Finland lost 47,000 km², including the strategic access to the Arctic Ocean, the corridor of Petsamo, by the Treaty of Paris in 1947. After the end of the WW II the geopolitical situation of the country determined that the only remaining option was a form of neutrality policy, combined with a careful deference to Soviet security interests (exemplified by the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of 1948). During the cold war, Finland was the privileged political interlocutor of its powerful eastern neighbour. At the same time, Finland enjoyed hegemony in trade with Russia. Finally, the USSR led one of the ideological-military world blocs.

The Nordic countries: What kind of threats do the Nordic countries perceive as relevant in the Post-Cold War period? What kind of security policy have the Nordic countries adopted? We are going to try to grasp the main points

80. *Dictionnaire de Géopolitique* sous la direction de -Yves Lacoste. Flammarion. 1993.

of their security strategies from three special reports⁸¹ in which Sweden, Norway and Finland re-examine the political-military changes, the effects on their security positions, and their main lines of action.

If the security dilemmas facing the Nordic countries after 1989 have been somewhat different, they have shown a great deal in common. Regarding the matrix of concerns, we could note that their national security agendas call for a broad concept of security. The end of the Cold War made Nordic governments and people more aware of environmental and economic problems in the region. Once the Soviet Union became a second-class actor in the international arena and the Soviet military threat was downgraded, there was some room in the spectrum of national concerns for environmental and economic problems. In the Barents region “*there are problems whose origin is outside Nordic territory and despite that they affect directly the Nordic countries through different ways*” according to Ambassador Wanja Tornberg⁸². In fact, the dangers of pollution and radioactivity do not know borders. Economic crisis in a part of the region may affect the other part in different ways, i.e. migration, organised crime and unstable government in the neighbouring countries⁸³. A main concern is still the possible instability in its Russian neighbour as the political and financial crisis of August-September 1998⁸⁴.

The Finnish and Swedish reports emphasise human rights and democracy in international relations. You can read in the Swedish report that “*security ought not only to be for states, but also for populations, groups and individuals*”⁸⁵. Concerning the unit problem, the Norwegian position is more traditional and state-centric⁸⁶.

As to the functional approaches to security policy, the three documents stress the importance of promoting stability, conflict prevention and crisis management. As to the strong stress on stability promotion, it is noticeable that they focus on the tight linkage between stability and security in the Post-Cold War. Eriksson suggests the subjective nature of this linkage. In the author’s words, “*while the security of states and the world at large objectively faced a much more severe military threat during the Cold War than today, the current instability implies a high level of uncertainty, which in turn generates a diffuse feeling of insecurity*”⁸⁷. This

81. - *Sweden in Europe and in the World*. Conclusion of a Report on Security Policy by the Swedish Parliamentary Defence Commission, Stockholm: Ministry of Defence, 1995. - *Security in a Changing World. Guidelines for Finland's Security Policy*. Report by the Council of State to the Parliament on 6th June 1995. Helsinki: Publications of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 8/1995.- *Forsvarskommissionen av 1990*. NOU 1992. Cited by Clive ARCHER in *Nordic Perspectives on European Security in Visions of European Security - Focal point Sweden and Northern Europe*. Stockholm: Olof Palme International Center, 1996.

82. Personal interview with Ambassador Wanja Tornberg, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, 13/5/97, Stockholm.

83. In particular, the Finnish report emphasises that security policy “*should in accordance with the broad concept of security incorporate the external factors that affect the attainment of the Finnish society's values and goals*”. p.9.

84. Regarding Russia’s military threat, the Nordic countries are worried about the Russian abandonment of the principle of no-first-use. Russia has set up exceptions to its promise not to use nuclear weapons against any state party to the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Alexander A. SERGOUNIN, op.cit, p.333.

85. *Sweden in Europe and in the World*. op.cit, p.9-10.

86. Johan ERIKSSON. *Security in the Barents Region. Interpretation and Implications of the Norwegian Barents Initiative*. SAGE PUBLICATIONS, Cooperation and Conflict, Vol. 30 (3), 1995.

87. Ibid.

interaction is stronger in Barents due to the geographical proximity of economic, social and political instability in the Russian Federation.

As to the tools, first the cooperative security model is considered vital in order to promote and manage stability. Cooperative engagement is considered quite useful and viable at dealing with the widespread and dangerous consequences of decades of military competition, in particular, to clean up the vast environmental degradation of the Barents region⁸⁸. Second, cooperation is an important means of promoting stability. It is clear that progress cannot be attained without economic cooperation between the Nordic countries and Russia in the development and restructuration of north-western Russia. Rather than bilateral cooperation, they rely on the widening role of international institutions as a channel for security-enhancing cooperation. Thus, regionalisation is an ongoing process in the High North.

If security policy is considered from a political-military point of view, the differences between the three Nordic countries remain after the end of the Cold War. Finland and Sweden rely on their traditional non-military alignment during periods of peace and neutrality during war, combined with a credible independent defence capability and an active foreign policy. Their non-provocative defence solutions contribute largely to military and strategic stability in Northern Europe. However, it is doubtful to what extent their adherence to the EU have not modified their security status. The Norwegian report points out that their country *is still facing with possible military threats to its territory that it needs the support of an alliance to deter*⁸⁹. Thus, the NATO link is seen as the only credible military assurance for Norway against any eventual military threat.

What conclusion may be drawn from the above-mentioned factors as to the security strategy that the Nordic countries have taken to make the state secure? Although the choice is between adopting a national security or an international security strategy⁹⁰, the solution is often a policy that mixes elements of these two strategies, according to B. Buzan⁹¹. Arbatov concurs with him⁹² and adds *the decisive question when assessing security policy is to where its emphasis on strategies and instruments is actually placed*⁹³. In my view, the three reports demonstrate a greater stress on international commitment to solve problems through institutionalised cooperation, rather than on traditional national defence. Both the adoption of a broad security concept and a cooperative security model show that their security policies focus on the sources

88. Janie LEATHERMAN. *Making the case for Cooperative Security*. (Book Review Essay). SAGE PUBLICATIONS, Cooperation and Conflict, Vol. 31 (1), 1996.

89. Cited by C. ARCHER, op. cit.

90. According to Buzan, *a national security strategy* implies to take action to reduce vulnerability and it is largely within the threaten state. The second option, *an international security strategy* rests on trying to eliminate or reduce the threats by addressing their causes at the source, and it depends on the adjustment of relations between states either directly, or by making changes in the systemic conditions that influence the way in which states make each other feel more (or less) secure. B. BUZAN, op.cit, p. 331.

91. Ibid, p. 335.

92. In Arbatov words, *“It is indisputable that the national security policy of a state contains features of different strategies and combination of different foreign policy instruments”*. Alexei ARBATOV. *Russian Foreign Policy Thinking in Russia and Europe. The Emerging Security Agenda*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. p.307.

93. Ibid, p. 307.

and causes of threats, the purpose being not to block or offset the threats, but to reduce them by political action. Thus, the international security compound gains force in the security policies of the Nordic countries.

The Russian Federation: There have been two main conflicting tendencies since Gorbachev opened up a debate on foreign policy in the mid-80's. They can be called the revisionist and traditionalist strategies⁹⁴. The former is based on Gorbachev's new thinking paradigm, and calls for a broader security concept, abandonment of military-strategic parity and pursuit of broad political cooperation within the different institutional frameworks. The traditionalist perspective may be equated with a traditional power policy and emphasises Russia's aspiration as a global power, describes its interests as opposed to those of the West, and advocates the use of the power instrument (military or economic sanctions) to achieve Russian national interests. This strategy has been gaining force since 1992. Its importance was ratified by the Foreign Policy concept, a compromise among the three main actors in external relations (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, and the Duma). Since its adoption by the Russian Security Council in April 1993, vital national interests became the cornerstones of national political thinking⁹⁵. The appointment of Mr. Primakov as Russian Foreign Minister and his rapid accession to the Prime Minister post in September 1998 indicates the force of this tendency. That is not to say that international cooperation does not enter into Russia's vital national interest to some extent.

Let us focus on the Russia's security policy in Northern Europe. In line with its Western orientation in the beginning of the 90's, President Yeltsin issued a special decree on relations with the Nordic countries in April 1992.

94. However, the political spectrum in Russia is too complicated and differentiated to allow for a simple division into those two camps. In my view, we could identify five major schools of thought that influence Russian Foreign Policy. The first trend is the *New thinking paradigm* of Gorbachev and Kozyrev. The adherents to the second defend a democratic and market-oriented line for Russia and retain a multi-ethnic, secular, pluralist and cosmopolitan character of Russia with an assertive "great power" foreign policy, especially in the 'near abroad'. The third regards Russia as a great power, but resting on a more ethnically defined Russian base. The fourth school of thought sees Russia in the midst of a spiritual rebirth and religious revival. They are slavophiles and isolationist. The last school advocates for the establishment of law and order in Russia but also for the restoration of the Soviet Union and its influence in World affairs. Jose Luis MASEGOSA. *Eurasianism and its influence in Russia's foreign Policy*. Warsaw: College of Europe, Spring 1997.

95. In the midst of 1992 and especially 1993, Russia came to know a crisis in defining its priorities in external policy. This marked the end of the unconditional Westernised tendency in the definition of the external orientation. Neo-imperialist tendencies reappeared. It was a *melange* of nationalism, pan-Slavism, Eurasianism and Western-style neo-realism. According to them, Russia was, and continues to be a "*great world power*". Several reasons stayed behind the shift in Russian Foreign Policy that appeared in the end of 1992 and culminated in the *Foreign Policy Concept* of April 1993. The main reason was the failure of Russian economic development. Russia did not succeed in achieving its stated objective of integrating the country into the world economy. The disappointing developments in the economic transition undermined the foundation on which the New Thinking Paradigm was constructed. This made the political leadership more vulnerable to the mounting pressure of nationalist and neo-imperialist. Besides that, the opposition profited of the dissatisfaction of the population towards the reform policies. Further, this entire circle triggered the reemergence of the conservative institutions from the Soviet period, namely the Armed Forces, the military-industrial complex, the gas and oil lobby, the collective farms and the KGB. All this *melange* of circumstances created a feeling that more had been conceded to the West than has been gained. *Ibid*, p. 26.

This decree deemphasised the importance of military force in guaranteeing the security of Russia in Northern Europe. It argued that international cooperation and non-military instruments of power are important elements in guaranteeing the security of the country⁹⁶. Moscow's new cooperative security stance in Northern Europe was ratified by Russia's membership in the two regional-building processes: the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and the Council of Baltic Sea States. The avoidance of Isolation in European politics and the economic *enjeu* is behind the Russian approach to Northern Europe. In my opinion, it would be naïve to deduce that the concept of comprehensive security has permeated to large extent Russia's security thinking merely from the fact that Russia is cooperating with the Nordic countries to solve environmental problems.

This is not to say that perceptions of threats to Russian security in Northern Europe did not change to some extent after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the constitution of the Barents region. As cooperation developed between Russia and its Nordic neighbours, the tension between Russian and USA diminished to certain point and the Russians considered the risk of a direct attack by the West as significantly reduced. However, the risk of a global war with the participation of the USA was not ruled out. Thus the Barents area continued to be vital due to its strategic location and the deployment of Russia's main strategic sea-based nuclear forces.

On the other hand, the Russian military doctrine, signed by Yeltsin in November 1993, mentioned *the expansion of military blocs and alliances to states in the vicinity of Russia* as a source of possible conflict⁹⁷. We cannot rule out a second NATO enlargement that could include some Baltic country. Neither can we exclude a Finnish application for membership⁹⁸. Those possible scenarios *in extremis* could be considered as a military threat to Russian vital interests in Northern Europe.

Both the assessment of Russian politics after the end of the Cold War and the special considerations about its Northern dimension, show that in general a national security strategy has prevailed in Russian security thinking for the past few years, lessened by a cooperative-oriented security approach in Northern Europe.

96. Alexander A. SERGOUNIN. *The Russian Dimension of Nordic Security - hard choices and opportunities in Visions of European Security - Focal point Sweden and Northern Europe*. Stockholm: Olof Palme international Center, 1996.

97. A. ARBATOV, op.cit, p.313.

98. If we read carefully the report by the Council of State to the Parliament on 6th June 1995 - *Security in a Changing World. Guidelines for Finland's Security Policy* -, we may note that the Council of State emphasises that *Finland is not seeking membership like countries in central Europe*. However, *"if the security constellation in Europe changes essentially, Finland will assess its security situation and arrangements in the light of these development"*.

6 Conclusions: The Barents Euro-Arctic Region as a Security-building project within the new security agenda

Though security itself is not mentioned as a sector for cooperation in the Kirkenes Declaration, the Stoltenberg initiative is a clear security-building project that embraces the new multidimensional security concept. The Barents Euro-Arctic framework implies a new attitude towards security in the European High North, focusing on the establishment of constructive cooperation arrangements that go directly to the sources of the problems, and that attempt to reach economic and political stability in the region.

First, the final goal of the Barents project is to reach normalisation and promoting stability in the region. Olav Brundtland defines the Barents initiative as *the most important contribution to the normalisation and stabilisation in the High North*⁹⁹. *The BEAR is an offensive strategy aimed at changing enemy perceptions into relations characterised by amity and stability*¹⁰⁰. Normalisation refers to the return to the situation existing before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and especially, the tight Russo-Norwegian relationship during the *Pomor era*. Thus, the Soviet period would have been an exceptional phase in the relationship between both countries.

Stabilisation refers to dealing with the actual problems that directly or indirectly threaten survival in the area. The Kirkenes Declaration has set up eight issue-areas for joint action, the environmental and economic fields being the most important ones. The actors are tackling the serious environmental problems in the Kola Peninsula and the social differences between the Eastern and Western sides. In fact, pollution, migration, flow of refugees, drugs, crime, all of which having a Russian source, are the real concerns of the Nordic states. Economic difficulties of the Russian side are the real concern of Moscow. The Barents project encompasses both sets of concern. These areas of concern and cooperation show that the Barents framework has embraced the new broad concept of security.

Pragmatically chosen issues of cooperation strengthen the role of the BEAR in promoting stability. This framework succeeds in accommodating Russian emphasis on economic cooperation and Nordic emphasis on environmental cooperation¹⁰¹. Although priorities differ, compromises incorporate both elements. We could refer to a *Gentlemen's Agreement* between the Nordic countries and Russia by which the latter cooperates in solving environmental problems in North-western Russia as far as the Nordic countries

99. Personal interview with Brundtland Olav, Director of the Norwegian Institute of International affairs, 7/4/97,Oslo.

100. Johan ERIKSSON. *Coping with insecurity in Reconstructing Survival*. Umeå (Sweden): Umeå University, 1996.

cooperate in the restructuration and development of the economy in the Russian eastern side. In my view, this environment-economic linkage should be taken as natural since unless economic cooperation is going well, it is difficult to implement environmental measures. This linkage is the heart of the Barents cooperation framework. What distinguishes this to other similar frameworks is that the Barents framework implies a compromise between the environment-concerned Nordic states and Russian economic needs. Further, the integration of the environmental dimension in all economic activities constitutes another striking characteristic of this framework and reinforces the credibility and the efficiency of the Barents programmes. This scheme leads to a wide cooperation framework aimed at solving environmental, economic and social problems through a comprehensive and coherent strategy. The satisfaction of both concerns through the same framework is promoting mutual trust and confidence between the actors. This in turn is improving the picture that each country has of the other.

Second, cooperation is the privileged tool that the BEAR participants use in order to reach their goals. Cooperation in the solution of common problems enhances mutual understanding and feeling of trust between states whose relationship has been subjected to the global confrontation for the past fifty years. Further, cooperation carried out primarily by regional actors and civil society takes on a great role in this scheme. This in turn closes societies of so different cultural backgrounds. Cooperation in those selected areas leads necessarily to greater stability in the region through the increased predictability and certainty in the Russian-Nordic relationship. On the other hand, cooperation is carried out by pragmatic and flexible institutions that provide efficiency and stability to the joint action. This is not to say that the present cooperative-oriented scheme has changed the overall picture that each country has of the other. The *timing* factor is important when results are to be counted. It is less than six years that the Barents initiative came up. What you have now is that Russia and the Nordic countries treat each other as partners due to this framework and they proceed with cooperation in what used to be less than a decade ago the most sensitive area in the world. Both are interested for different reasons in more interactions. Thus the Barents *modus operandi* is expected to continue in the coming years.

Further, we should bear in mind the spillover effect that cooperation is having in other fields. In fact, a closer regional cooperation has stimulated favourable military contacts. Common planning of rescue operations in the Barents Sea is possible now. Joint military exercises are no longer and utopian thought, especially for international tasks in UN-sponsored operations. In fact, a first military exercise between NATO countries and Russia took place in the Barents Sea in March 1994. Joint exercises among other military-to-military contacts and great openness and transparency constitute efficient confidence and security-building measures within the OSCE framework. They are an indicative proof that comprehensive and cooperative-oriented security serves to reduce the impact of the military factor on the conduct of international relations in the European High North.

101. After the BEARC in Rovaniemi in 1995, Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev highlighted the importance of joint efforts to develop the economy of North-western Russia, adding that work to clean up nuclear waste on the Kola Peninsula was also important. REUTERS, 10/10/1995.

Third, the importance of the Regional Council in the institutional framework guarantees that decisions are made as close as possible to the citizens. It is clear that the central states are not longer privileged to be the sole actors in the field of security in the region. In the European Far North, we have seen this phenomenon when regions from the three Nordic countries and Russia met in Kirkenes to sign a parallel Protocol Agreement on interregional cooperation¹⁰². This responds to what Swedish Minister Lars Karlberg calls a certain contradiction of interests between the Southern capitals and the northern peripheral provinces. The interests of the latter surface after the disappearance of the bipolar world¹⁰³. However the importance of the regional level, we cannot forget that the Barents Euro-Arctic Region is a state-centric project that reacts to the major ongoing regionalisation in the region through the North-Calotte and other local frameworks. The cooperation generated by the civil societies, assisted by regional institutions and non-governmental institutions receives the necessary legitimacy, recognition and formal identity through the establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. In definitive, it is a matter of meeting an uncontrolled diffusion of power among regional authorities and civil society with a controlled diffusion of power. The Barents project integrates rather than clashes with the regional action.

Fourth, the fact that the new security agenda is very present in the Barents project does not entail that *realpolitik*s leave the scene. It is true that in the early phase of the Barents project¹⁰⁴ Norway broke away from one of the axioms that the Norwegian foreign policy had had for decades: the avoidance of any bilateral arrangement with Russia in the North. However, Norway looked rapidly for the involvement of other Nordic and European partners in the BEAR project. *Realpolitik*s were behind this attempt to multilateralise the cooperation forum. In Gavel's words, Norway needed as many Western countries as possible *for backing on their Western flank in order to have room for manoeuvre on its eastern flank*¹⁰⁵. In practice, given that the threat of military force is still possible due to uncertainty and instability in the Russian Federation, the small Nordic countries have to ally themselves with friendly major powers in order to have a base from which to cooperate with the Russians. Should Russian politics take an unexpected turn, the according to Minister Stoltenberg *the best way to deal with such a situation is to ensure that the Nordic countries are firmly linked to broader-based European arrangements so that any pressure on the area is also regarded as pressure on our Western partners in the cooperation*¹⁰⁶. In the case of Finland and Sweden, we could point out that EU membership gives a sufficient feeling of belonging to, which provides the necessary confidence to proceed with further development of relationships with Russia. Further the presence of the EU in the BEAR framework gives confidence to

102. Protocol Agreement from the statutory meeting of the Regional Council of the Barents Region. Kirkenes, 11th January 1993.

103. KARLBERG, op.cit.

104. This bilateral cooperation centred on environmental cooperation and was a result of the bilateral environmental protection agreement between Norway and Russia, signed in Kirkenes on 3rd September 1992. This was a follow-up to the environmental protection agreement with the Soviet Union from 1988.

105. S. JERVELL, op. cit.

106. Quoted by I. B. NEUMANN, op. cit.

the Nordic countries as to the importance that the former ascribes to this regional-building structure.

Finally the Barents region is a Nordic move to avoid political marginalisation in Post-Cold War politics. As we said earlier, the Barents region is born in a moment when the role of the three Nordic states in the new Post-Cold world is quite uncertain. Normalisation and stabilisation in Barents are expected to underpin the central position of the Nordic countries in the reversed power triangle of the North hemisphere. The Barents framework would be the new eastern connection between the Nordic countries and Russia. Finland and Sweden reinforce the Nordic central position by their EU membership. The Western connection is the Norwegian-USA North Atlantic Partnership. Thus the Barents project comes to reinforce the Nordic central position in international relations above the Ecuador. Nordic strategy, in particular Norwegian, is aimed at constituting a geopolitical centre meeting place between the European Union in the South, the USA in the West and Russia in the East. Norden's core role in this project rests on being the privileged bridge between the corners of the triangle. Thus the reinforcement of the geopolitical centre meeting place between the EU, Russia and USA enhances the political role of the Nordic countries in the new international arena.

Abbreviations

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| AEPS | Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy |
| BEAR | Barents Euro-Arctic Region |
| BEARC | Barents Euro-Arctic Region Council |
| BREAP | Barents Regional Environmental Action Programme |
| CFE | Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty |
| CSO | Committee of Senior Officials |
| EEA | European Economic Area |
| EFTA | European Free Trade Area |
| ERC | Executive Regional Committee (Regional Council) |
| EU | European Union |
| ICBM | Inter-continental ballistic missile |
| NAFTA | North Atlantic Free Trade Area |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NIS | New Independent States |
| NPT | Non-Proliferation Treaty |
| NSR | Northern Sea Route |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| RC | Regional Council |
| SLOCs | North Atlantic Sea lines of communication |
| SSBN | Strategic missile carrying submarine |
| START | Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty |
| UN | United Nations |
| WEU | Western European Union |

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