

A New Approach of Security in North Europe
- competing hunt for hydrocarbons and energy security, environmental risks, impacts of
climate change, and trans-nationalism and borderless space?

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Introduction

Theoretically it is possible to argue that if the 1990s meant a step from geopolitics into geoeconomics and new approaches of geopolitics, then at the beginning of the 21st century we are in a state of global geopolitics, which includes aspects of traditional geopolitics emphasizing the importance of the military and strategic natural resources such as oil, and geoeconomics emphasizing economics over politics. This has also been described by a slogan “tanks yesterday, energy today”. Indeed, when the prize of crude oil in the world market is \$74 per barrel (like the prize of the Brent-quality oil of the North Sea was in April 20, 2006 (HS 21.4.2006)) it is no easy to argue against this interpretation.

The above-mentioned fact is one, but only one, relevant, reason to say why energy security, i.e. guaranteed security to have energy enough and an access into energy resources, has been announced more often as a part of national interests of many countries and one of the main goals of several governments. For example, it is the main theme of the Russian Presidency of the G-8 in 2006 and the Summit between the European Union and the ASEM countries in August 2006.

Followed from this energy security is some sort of metaphor of a new approach of security, which is the theme and topic of my article. Other metaphors are competing hunt for hydrocarbons, environmental risks, climate change, and trans-nationalism and a control of globalized borderless spaces. All in all, the article discusses on different concepts of security in general and especially comprehensive security. In the background is the interpretation that alternative interpretations and approaches of security and comprehensive security have become on political vocabularies and foreign policy agendas of many states. And further, environmental and / or human security is there to describe foreign policy approaches.

It is possible to argue that there is going on a big and new kind of game on economic and political hegemony in the world. Natural resources, especially strategic resources, are an important part of that, although it is said that we live in a virtual reality, where high-tech, scientific and technical knowledge and immaterial values are playing more important role. Although, the game is global and mostly deals with Middle Asia (like for example, Brzezinski has argued by the slogan “The Grand Chessboard of Middle Asia) or southern part of Eurasia, North Europe is a part of that. This is on one hand, due to the fact that the European Union is one of the strongest economic powers of the world and correspondingly, Russia is a country of growing produce and export of natural resources, especially energy resources such as natural gas and oil and also a strong military power. On the other hand, North Europe is there due to its rich natural resources, mostly those in the shelves of Northern seas and the Russian North indicating that the Eurasian North might be a new “Heartland” of energy.

The Baltic Sea region is said to be the most dynamic region in the world from the point of view (Elleman-Jenssen 2001). Either correct or not, but more relevant here is the fact that culturally the

Baltic Sea region shares most of the same basis and values. Politically it is cooperative, and economically it is a fast growing area with a dynamic internal development process and strong inter-regional linkages. (for more details e.g. Baltic Region - Conflict and Cooperation, 2004) Correspondingly, the Barents Sea region with its many nations, identities and different cultures is culturally active including several grass-root activities. Politically it has also been an interesting cooperative region, even a successful example of region-building in the post-Cold War Europe and circumpolar North as the institutionalized Barents cooperation shows (Declaration 1993; for more details e.g. Pettersen et al., 2004). And further, partly behind the both sub-regions is the Nordic Region with institutionalized, both inter-governmental, civilian and grass-root, cooperation during the last 50 years. Finally, recently the northern most part of North Europe, and actually the western part of the Eurasian North, has become at the beginning of the 21st century more important by economic way, and not any more only a target area of flows of globalization but more relevant, and partly even strategic, in world politics (see e.g. Feasibility Study 2005).

Here North Europe, or the Western part of the Eurasian North, is a crossing point between different countries and nations, cultures and regions, economic and political systems, and new international actors like for example, Indigenous peoples' organizations and non-governmental organizations. The region is dynamic due to both East-West contacts and North-South relations, and has influences into the situation and further development of the European Union.

Based on the above there are good reasons to enlarge the focus of the slogan and argue that the whole Northern Europe is politically and economically stable area and also an interesting and active region of international and inter-regional cooperation which includes rich regional dynamics by many national, regional and local actors. The special point of view of the paper is to discuss on a new security approach in North Europe at the beginning of the 21st century.

Firstly this paper lists different aspects and factors, here called key phenomena, which are relevant and important when trying to define new kind of comprehensive security in North Europe. Secondly, the paper discusses on security both theoretically and especially dealing with North Europe from the Cold War period into the beginning of the 21st century going beyond traditional security and security-policy and to discuss on issues like energy security, environmental risks, impacts of climate change, and the importance of national borders and control of them. Thirdly, there is discussion on the strategic importance of the North including natural resources and the military in general, and especially from the point of view of security like for example energy security. Finally the paper raises and discusses on some phenomena, which might be relevant when defining a comprehensive security and a holistic picture of the current geopolitics of North Europe.

Key phenomena of a new Northern security

Among the main factors of the current security and security-political situation of (North) Europe are on one hand, and first of all, state sovereignty and security guaranteed by the military, this includes international cooperation for stability and peace in the context of both the European Union and NATO and either common or national military activities like for example, strategic nuclear submarines in Northern seas. On the other hand, economic welfare, prosperity and competitiveness either in a national context or in that of the European Union, this includes man-made infrastructure, transportation and an access to natural resources, and thus, energy security, too.

If this is interpreted as a concept of traditional security, there are also other approaches and factors of security, which are relevant and important when interpreting and defining new kind of security in North Europe, as well in the Eurasian North (see Feasibility Study 2005). Here I list the following phenomena:

First, long-range pollution and environmental risks indicate a conflict between a man and a

nature like for example the nuclear problem of the Barents Sea region;

Second, climate change with multi-functional impacts like e.g. melting of sea ice and glaciers, and a rising sea level indicates global changes and influences insecurity in Northern regions threatening coastal areas, man-made infrastructure and traditional diet (the so-called food security by Paci et al., 2004);

Third, a competing hunt for hydrocarbons indicates the strategic importance of the region's energy resources, especially oil and natural gas, like for example, that between Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea;

Fourth, followed from this transportation of raw materials indicates flows of globalization like for example, a growing transportation of oil and gas from the Kola Peninsula to Europe and North America and the planned Baltic pipeline from Russia to Germany on the bottom of the Baltic Sea;

Fifth, information and communication, capital and labour indicate other kinds of flows of globalization;

Sixth, growing trans-boundary cooperation and trans-nationalism indicate on one hand, national borders and control of them, and on the other international cooperation across the borders, and finally a borderless space both indicates importance of regionalization and also creates new kinds of threat pictures;

Seventh, sustainable development indicates human security, i.e. every day's security of people, and reminds the importance of implementation of accepted policies with an aim to save the earth.

Discussion on security

The hypothesis of the paper is that a holistic picture of Northern European geopolitics in general and especially a comprehensive security of the region requests to take into consideration new kinds of key phenomena. This is especially if security is tried to define from the point of view of a region. Further, that Russia should be taken as a security dimension, and different security-dimensions of Russia - like for example, military-security, internal security (against terrorism), energy security (import of oil and gas), environmental security and human security - should be analyzed, as well their influences in Europe and into the EU-Russian relations.

In the background there is the theoretical question how to define comprehensive security including aspects of traditional, environmental and human security. Therefore, the paper includes on one hand, a brief discourse on security and different concepts of security, and on the other, a brief discourse on the development of security in North Europe.

Traditional security mostly means national security, i.e. security from the point of view of a state guaranteed by the military. It can also be called a weapon-oriented security, or "a unilateral competitive national military security" (Newcombe 1986). This means that security or stability of, as well as peace in, a region is finally guaranteed by the military, or a deterrence of a use of a military power. Behind is thinking that a state would like to have hegemony over a geographical region and / or natural resources, and if needed is ready to use military power for that. This kind of security guaranteed by the power of a state and its military organizations is the core of the unified state system (e.g. Buzan 1991), and this concept of security is very much according to traditional theories of International Relations like (political or new) realism.

Although there have been tens of regional and civil wars per year at the 20th century threat pictures and security matters have changed to include the so-called 'soft' issues like for example, trans-boundary pollution, environmental catastrophes, infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, illegal immigration and organized crime such as drug and human trade. For example, after the collapse of the Soviet Union the European hierarchy list of threat pictures has included elements of the 'soft' or comprehensive security like for example, organized crime and crime across borders, smuggling of drugs, diseases and trafficking in human beings and simply a gap in living standards (e.g. Pursiainen

Based on the scientific assessment of the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) the three main themes of international relations and geopolitics of the circumpolar North are the following ones: first, the increased circumpolar cooperation by Indigenous peoples' organizations and sub-national governments; second, region-building with nations as major actors; and third, the relationship between the Arctic and the outside world including traditional security-policy, since the North is still highly strategic to the USA and Russia (Heininen 2004b).

Dealing with the fourth stage what might be important and challenging is how dramatic change there will be in the sea ice conditions of the Arctic Ocean and other northern seas in the near future. The current and rapidly increased phenomenon of the thinning of the sea ice of the Arctic Ocean, much influenced by climate change, is estimated to continue (ACIA 2004). If it will continue it will increase the ice-free areas of the Arctic, which correspondingly, creates new possibilities to increase both the utilization of natural resources and that of traffic in the two passages of the Arctic Ocean. Correspondingly, an increased traffic will include both civilian transportation like for example, oil tankers, and the military activities like for example, patrolling and military manoeuvres, in the two passages of the Arctic Ocean, and possibly also in the high sea of the Arctic Ocean.

Strategic importance of the North

of the Circumpolar North was about \$US 230 billion in 2001. The figure mostly consists on oil and natural gas drilling which production is mostly for the South to meet energy needs of the centers of developed countries. Further, about 70% of the production comes from the Russian North (66,8%) and North Norway (4,4%). (Duhaime 2004)

Thus, the Eurasian North is becoming a new “Energy Heartland”, and the Barents Sea region can be taken as a “big oil playground” or a “geopolitical hub” (e.g. Brunstad, Magnus, Swanson, Honneland and Overland 2004; UPI News 2005).

Correspondingly, when applying the technology models of geopolitics the end of the Cold War has not meant an exclude of the military, because in the region there are still heavy military structures like for example, command, control, communication and intelligence (C3I) systems, and activities like for example, strategic nuclear submarines (SSBN) patrolling in the Arctic Ocean (e.g. Heininen 2004b). Followed from these two phenomena, at the beginning of the 21st century Northern European geopolitics includes on one hand, (mega) projects and existing activities to utilize natural resources and plans for new (sea) routes for navigation (e.g. Gunnarsson 2005), and on the other hand, that the region has a high strategic importance militarily especially for the USA and Russia.

If this indicates the relevance of traditional geopolitics and political power based on new realism, there are also both new approaches of geopolitics and geoeconomics. For example, if governments earlier mostly controlled the utilization of natural resources in the North, today trans-national corporations are active and mobile to transfer investments and labour into the region for bigger profits. Correspondingly, national and sub-national governments try to attract these corporations and their investments to the region for jobs.

There are also impacts of globalization like for example, climate change and long-range air and sea pollution and flows of globalization (Heininen 2005). One result of this is that in North Europe, as well generally in the circumpolar North, there have been both environmental conflicts either in use of land and water or resources (e.g. Osherenko and Young 1989; Riipinen 2005). In the North there are also influences and examples of innovations in governance, i.e. “the development of innovate political and legal arrangements that meet the needs of the residents” of the region (Young and Einarsson 2004, 287-288). This is due to both devolution giving self-determination, which is not against the larger, mostly national, political systems influential in the region, and regionalization indicating mostly a bottom-up activity and finally region-building which is mostly lead by state-actors. This is one of the reasons, why North European, as well the whole North, might be interpreted to be, or become, relevant in world politics.

European policies on new security approach

The European Union's Northern Dimension has responded to the new comprehensive human security agenda, in ways which were also mindful of the security and geopolitical realities of the Cold War period. From the point of view of the European Union, the Union's Northern Dimension (EU's ND) is a framework and process for continuous dialogue on cooperation between the EU and its neighbours in North Europe (the Russian Federation, Norway, Iceland and Greenland), and for co-ordination, even management, of cross-border cooperation across the EU borders (The European Union, 2003). In keeping with its new concern for comprehensive and human security, the “areas for cooperation ”under the EU's Northern Dimension include, among others, the environment, nuclear safety, energy cooperation”.

Due to the latest enlargement of the European Union into Eastern Europe, especially covering almost the whole Baltic Sea region, the EU-Russian dialogue has become critical when “strengthening stability, wellbeing and sustainable development in northern Europe” (Guidelines

for.. November 2005). The agreed four “Common Spaces” between the European Union and the Russian Federation - Economic cooperation; Freedom, Security and Justice; External Security; and Research, Education and Culture – would be right kinds of means for this situation, if only they will not be dead letters but flexible tools for a process including open dialogue between the European Union and the Russian Federation.

The EU's ND ensures that Union's environmental requirements are met, as well as necessary actions taken to monitor relevant and acute environmental threats. This is evident in a heightened interest towards building the capacity for cooperation in nuclear safety and environmental issues with Russia and the EU, its focus upon “sustainable development” in terms of resource utilization, and its interest in “securing the border” while harmonizing legislation, standards and procedures in the interests of protecting and promoting civil society and environmental security.

The latter is of particular interest to the countries of the shallow Baltic Sea due to intensive sea traffic and growing sea transportation, especially due to a growing transportation of oil from the new Russian terminals in the bottom of the Gulf of Finland to the Atlantic Ocean and the planned new oil pipeline from Russia to Germany in the bottom of the Baltic Sea. It is also relevant in the Barents Sea region due to heavy oil and liquid gas (LNG) transportation from the new Russian oil terminals in the Kola Peninsula to Europe and North America (e.g. Frantzen and Bambulyak, 2003; UPI News 2005).

As a conclusion, if these oil and natural gas transportations deal with both energy security and environmental security, then climate change, or actually impacts of that, indicates a new global issue, which is becoming a new security issue. This issue is, however, neither defined nor interpreted by traditional way but needs the concept of both environmental security and human security. Further, it needs both a holistic geopolitical picture and an approach of comprehensive security and requests not only multi-disciplinary research, international cooperation and global governance but also understanding and implementation of new approaches of security and a perception of a borderless space.

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