



palgrave▶pivot

**ARCTIC
EUPHORIA AND
INTERNATIONAL
HIGH NORTH
POLITICS**

Geir Hønneland



Arctic Euphoria and International High North Politics

Geir Hønneland

Arctic Euphoria and International High North Politics

palgrave
macmillan

Geir Hønneland
Fridtjof Nansen Institute
Oslo, Norway

ISBN 978-981-10-6031-1 ISBN 978-981-10-6032-8 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-6032-8

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017949463

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2017

The author of this book has received financial support from the Norwegian Non-fiction Literature Fund.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: Pattern adapted from an Indian cotton print produced in the 19th century

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature

The registered company is Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.

The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

PREFACE

“Norway on a High in the North”—this is what my colleague and friend Leif Christian Jensen called his Ph.D. thesis on Norwegian High North politics in the years following the turn of the millennium. What a wonderful title! “Arctic Euphoria” is my modest attempt to pin down the slightly longer lines in Norwegian policies towards the country’s northern regions and areas at similar latitudes beyond its borders as well. Throughout my career of nearly 25 years, I’ve experienced “the Great Barents Awakening” of the early and mid-1990s, “the Great High North Enchantment” that followed a good decade later, and recent years’ “Arctic wave”. It’s tapered off, but it’s been a wild ride. What comes up must go down—this is one of the main lessons I’ve learnt. But equally important when we speak about Northern Norway and its place in the world: what goes down must invariably come up again. And every time it happens, it’s as if it happens for the first time.

“Let it be said”, one of the Oslo-based founding fathers of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region told me a few years ago, “if Sogn and Fjordane [the Norwegian county with the highest density of fishery millionaires, located on the western coast] had been on our border with Russia, and not Finnmark [which actually *is* on the border with Russia], there wouldn’t have been any Barents Region.” He wasn’t talking about the geographical Barents region, which is pretty stationary, but of the *political* Barents regional project, which is more open to manipulation. His message was that Norwegian High North politics cannot be understood as foreign policy alone. In this case, according to this particular

founding father, the Barents Region, a major priority in post-Cold War Norwegian foreign policy, wasn't much about foreign policy at all.

My own starting point had been the opposite. Naively, as it appears, I told a group of students in Norway's northernmost country Finnmark in the mid-2000s, just as the Great High North Enchantment was on its rise, that the newly appointed minister Jonas Gahr Støre's High North initiative was about foreign policy—he was minister of foreign affairs, after all. “What?” was the response from the auditorium, “are you saying we've been fooled? We thought it was about *us*!”

Every Arctic nation has its own reasons for “being Arctic”. Sometimes “Arctic politics” is smaller than Arctic politics itself, aimed, for instance, at domestic needs of a, strictly speaking, non-Arctic nature. Sometimes “Arctic politics” is larger than Arctic politics itself, furthering wider, non-Arctic foreign policy aims. These lines are written overlooking the Shanghai skyline—my days in the southern Chinese metropole are filled with Arctic events. At the conference on Polar Law and Politics that I'm here for, I'll meet “the usual suspects” from the Nordic countries—it's our third visit to China in just two months. Twenty years ago, we met in Kirkenes and Murmansk. Today, we meet in Tromsø, Reykjavik and Shanghai. Latitude notwithstanding: the Arctic is all around.

In Norway, High North politics is a delicate issue; so is the way we speak about it. The public debate has an obligatory fact-based veneer, but below the surface, strong emotions are at play. At times, the most important thing has been to show which side you're on—either you were with us or against us. Fake news was presented before “fake news” was invented—sometimes truth just couldn't stand in the way of a good cause. It's been a challenging landscape for a social scientist to navigate—that is, unless you decide to jump on the bandwagon. In the political endeavour to build a region, scientific justification is always in demand.

*

My writings are an organic matter—parts of this book build on things I've published before, but they appear now in revised form and in a new context. Early drafts of Chaps. 2–4 were originally written in Norwegian and translated into English by Chris Saunders. Elana Wilson Rowe provided the native English speaker's—and the experienced researcher's—eye on some of the central concepts of the book. Its substance matter has developed in continuous dialogue with colleagues and friends at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute. Thanks to Senior Commissioning Editor Sara

Crowley-Vigneau at Palgrave's Shanghai office, for her continued support and enthusiasm for the project, and to the anonymous peer reviewer for constructive comments that have indeed helped improve the final text.

Needless to say: this is *one* story about Norway on a high in the North, not *the* story. Now it's in your hands.

Shanghai, China

Geir Hønneland

CONTENTS

1	Norway's High North Policies	1
2	The Great Barents Awakening	25
3	The Russian Factor	43
4	The Great High North Enchantment	61
5	The Arctic Wave	83
	Index	101

LIST OF MAPS

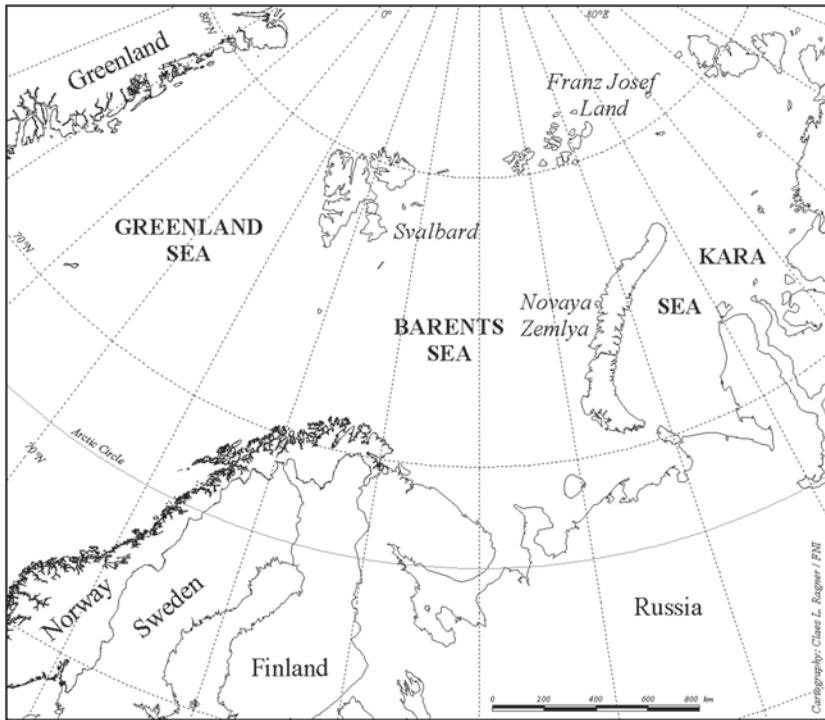
Map 1.1	The Barents Sea region	2
Map 1.2	Jurisdiction of the Barents Sea	5
Map 1.3	The Barents Euro-Arctic Region	8

Norway's High North Policies

Abstract The High North is the number one priority in Norwegian foreign politics. The country's High North strategies have traditionally centred on its relationship with other states in the Barents Sea area, Russia in particular. During the Cold War, security interests dominated, while after the dissolution of the Soviet Union institutionalized cooperation with Russia became the hallmark of Norwegian High North politics. From the mid-2000s, the division between foreign and domestic policies gradually dissolved, while more recently the circumpolar dimension has grown in importance. Balancing the domestic, regional, and circumpolar levels is a challenge in Norwegian High North politics, but this also gives an opportunity to cultivate different dimensions of these policies depending on the international political situation.

Keywords Norwegian Arctic politics · Norwegian High North politics
Barents region

As Norway is located on the Arctic rim of the European mainland, Arctic affairs are an integral part of the country's foreign policy. The strength of the Arctic component of Norwegian foreign policy has varied over time, as has its profile and formal designation. In general, the term "Arctic" was until recently seldom used in Norwegian foreign policy discourse, and then often referring to something farther off in either time (like polar explorations before the Second World War) or space



Map 1.1 The Barents Sea region. *Source* Fridtjof Nansen Institute

(outside Norway's immediate sphere of interest, such as the North Pole area or the American Arctic). "The North" (in Norwegian: *nord*) or "the northern regions" (in Norwegian: *nordområdene*) have been the preferred terms for describing the foreign politics arena in the European Arctic. In practice, Norway's northern foreign policy is mainly about relations with other states in the Barents Sea region, including the Svalbard archipelago (see Map 1.1). Of particular importance are relations with Russia.

With the end of the Cold War, reference to "the northern regions" in Norwegian foreign policy discourse almost disappeared, since it smacked of Cold War tensions or even of Norway's earlier reputation as an expansionist polar nation. Norway was now building up a reputation as a "peace-building nation", heavily involved in mediating peace in various

southern corners of the world. This did not mean that Norwegian foreign politics in the European Arctic no longer existed—only that the main focus was now on institutional cooperation with Russia, referred to as “strategies towards Russia”, or “neighbourhood policies”. In the mid-2000s, the northern regions (*nordområdene*, with “the High North” as the official English translation) were again explicitly defined as the number one priority of Norwegian foreign policy. Although this happened to coincide with the international buzz about a “rush for the Arctic”, it can largely be explained, as will be shown below, by internal issues in Norwegian politics and in the country’s relationship with Russia. Above all, this new northern policy has seen the disappearance of the division between foreign and internal politics. While it encompasses both traditional security politics in the European Arctic and the “softer” institutional collaboration with Russia initiated in the 1990s, many see Norway’s “new” northern policies as mainly an instrument for further developing business and science in the country’s northern regions. Circumpolar Arctic politics, for its part, has always been included in Norwegian High North strategies, but it has gained an increasingly prominent place in these strategies in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

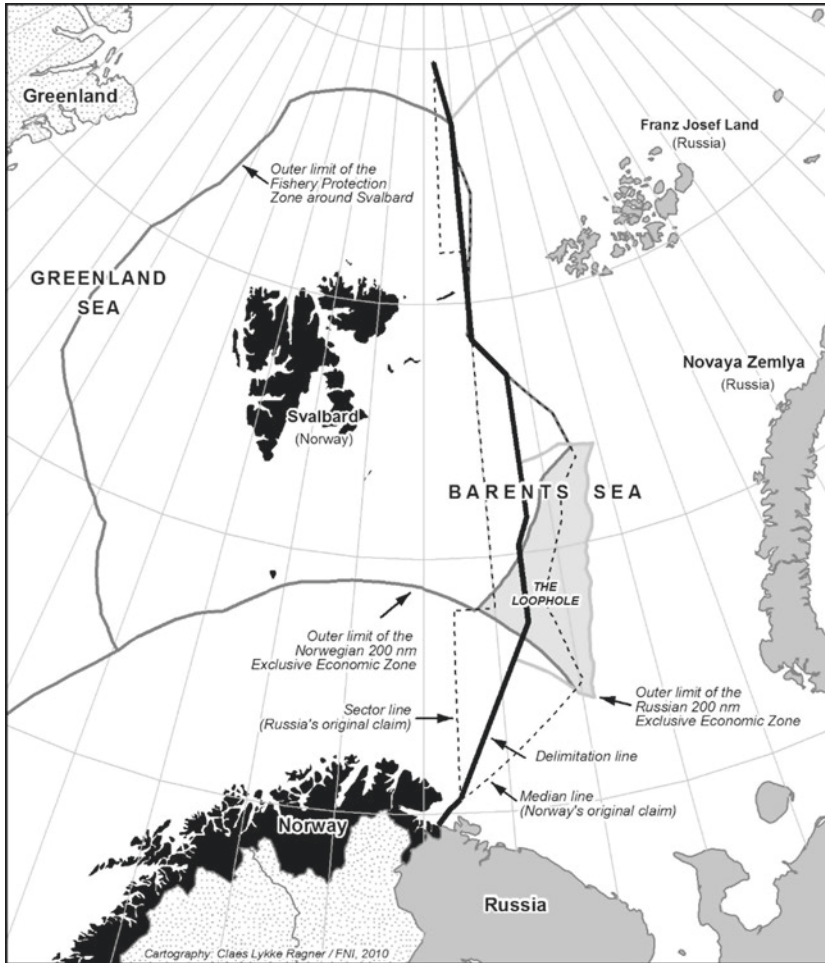
This chapter presents these four layers of Norwegian High Arctic policies.¹ We start with the legacy from the Cold War, namely the European Arctic as a high-tension interface between East and West, with the Kola Peninsula in Russia’s north-western corner considered to be the most heavily militarized region on the globe. The final decades of the Cold War also saw fundamental changes in the law of the sea, which placed most of the Barents Sea under Norwegian and Soviet jurisdiction but also left several jurisdictional issues unsettled. As a result of the same legal developments, Norway and the Soviet Union entered into a formal partnership to manage the rich fish resources of the area, a rare example of East–West collaboration in the Arctic during the Cold War era. This partnership set the example for cooperation in several other areas after the Soviet Union fell apart, which is the topic of our next section. Then we examine the “new” Norwegian politics on the High North from the mid-2000s, briefly presenting the major public documents and discussing the driving forces behind this new policy and recent years’ circumpolar turn. In the concluding section, we ask which legacies from the different layers of Norwegian High Arctic policies actually dominate. We also briefly discuss which interest groups are represented in the internal Norwegian debate on the High North.

*

The Northern Fleet, established on the Kola Peninsula in 1933, remained the smallest of the four Soviet naval fleets until the 1950s, when a period of expansion set in. By then, the Soviet Union had entered the nuclear age: the country's first nuclear submarine was stationed on the Kola Peninsula in 1958, close to the border with Norway. By the late 1960s, the Northern Fleet ranked as the largest of the Soviet fleets. In this situation, Norway chose the combined strategy of deterrence and reassurance. Deterrence was secured through NATO membership and by maintaining the Norwegian armed forces at a level deemed necessary to hold back a possible Soviet attack until assistance could arrive from other NATO countries. So that the Soviets should not misinterpret activities on the Norwegian side as aggressive, Norway emplaced a number of self-imposed restrictions upon itself. Notably, other NATO countries were not allowed to participate in military exercises east of the 24th parallel, which runs slightly west of the middle of Norway's northernmost county, Finnmark. The border between Norway and the Soviet Union was peaceful, but strictly guarded. There was no conflict, but there was also little interaction across that border.

Besides regular diplomatic contact, management of the abundant fish resources of the Barents Sea was an area of particular joint interest for Norway and the Soviet Union. From the late 1960s, the two countries had informally discussed the possibilities of bilateral management measures. A window of opportunity came with the drastic changes in the law of the sea that were implemented in the mid-1970s. The principle of 200-mile exclusive economic zones (EEZs) was agreed upon at the third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1975. The right and responsibility to manage marine resources within 200 nautical miles of shore was thus transferred to the coastal states. In 1975, the two countries agreed to establish a joint fisheries management arrangement for the Barents Sea,² by which the most important fish stocks in the area are split 50–50. The bilateral fisheries management regime is generally deemed a success—the parties have managed to keep the fish stocks at a sustainable level, and the Northeast Arctic cod is currently the largest cod stock in the world. The cooperation atmosphere between Norway and Russia has also been good, characterized by pragmatism and willingness to compromise.³

Both Norway and the Soviet Union established their EEZs in 1977 (see Map 1.2). However, the two states could not agree on the principle for drawing the delimitation line between their respective zones.



Map 1.2 Jurisdiction of the Barents Sea. *Source* Fridtjof Nansen Institute

The two had been negotiating the delimitation of the Barents Sea continental shelf since the early 1970s, and the division of the EEZs was brought into these discussions. The parties had agreed to use the 1958 Convention of the Continental Shelf as a basis. According to this convention, continental shelves may be divided between states if so agreed.

If agreement is not reached, the median line from the mainland border shall normally determine the delimitation line, but special circumstances may warrant adjustments. In the Barents Sea, Norway adhered to the median-line principle, whereas the Soviet Union claimed the sector-line principle, according to which the line of delimitation would run along the longitude line from the tip of the mainland border to the North Pole. The Soviets generally held out for the sector-line principle, having claimed sector-line limits to Soviet Arctic waters as early as in 1928. Moreover, they argued that in the Barents Sea special circumstances—notably, the size of the Soviet population in the area and the strategic significance of this region—warranted deviation from the median line.

In 1978, a temporary Grey Zone agreement was reached, to avoid unregulated fishing in the disputed area.⁴ This agreement required Norway and the Soviet Union to regulate and control their own fishers and third-country fishers licensed by either of them, and to refrain from interfering with the activities of the other party's vessels, or vessels licensed by them. The arrangement was explicitly temporary and subject to annual renewal. The Grey Zone functioned well for the purposes of fisheries management, but the prospects of underground hydrocarbon resources in the area led the parties to reach a final delimitation agreement in spring 2010.⁵ The agreement is a compromise, with the delimitation line midway between the median line and the sector line.

Another area of contention is the Fishery Protection Zone around Svalbard. Norway claims the right to establish an EEZ around the archipelago, but has so far refrained from doing so because the other signatories to the 1920 Svalbard Treaty have signalled that they would not accept such a move.⁶ The Svalbard Treaty gave Norway sovereignty over the archipelago, which had been a no man's land in the European Arctic.⁷ However, the treaty contains several limitations on Norway's right to exercise jurisdiction there. Most importantly, all signatory powers enjoy equal rights to let their citizens extract natural resources on Svalbard. Further, the archipelago is not to be used for military purposes, and there are restrictions on Norway's right to impose taxes on residents of Svalbard. The original signatories were Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the UK, and the USA. The Soviet Union joined in 1935, and at the time of writing (2017), there are 45 parties to the Treaty.

The other signatories (than Norway) hold that the non-discriminatory code of the Svalbard Treaty must apply also to the ocean area around the archipelago,⁸ whereas Norway refers to the treaty text, which

deals only with the land and territorial waters of Svalbard. The waters around Svalbard are important feeding grounds for juvenile cod, and the Protection Zone, determined in 1977, represents a “middle course” aimed at securing the young fish from unregulated fishing. As follows, the zone is not recognized by any of the other states that have had quotas in the area since the introduction of the EEZs. To avoid provoking other states, Norway refrained for many years from penalizing violators in the Svalbard Zone. Force was used for the first time in 1993, when Icelandic trawlers and Faroese vessels under flags of convenience—neither with a quota in the Barents Sea—started fishing there. The Norwegian Coast Guard fired warning shots at the ships, which then left the zone. The following year, an Icelandic fishing vessel was for the first time arrested for fishing in the Svalbard Zone without a quota.

*

Norway's foreign policy in the European Arctic during the 1990s was mainly about bringing Russia into committing collaborative networks. The idea of a “Barents region” was first aired by Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Thorvald Stoltenberg in April 1992. After consulting with Russia and the other Nordic states, the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) was established by the Kirkenes Declaration of January 1993, whereby Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia pledged to work together at both the regional and national levels.⁹ The northernmost counties of the four countries are represented on the Regional Council of BEAR, as are the indigenous peoples of the region (see Map 1.3).¹⁰ The Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), on which Denmark, Iceland, and the European Commission sit in addition to the four core states, was created to promote and facilitate intergovernmental cooperation. A number of other countries have observer status in BEAC.

The BEAR was designed to promote stability and prosperity in the area. Its purpose is enshrined in the concepts of normalization, stabilization, and regionalization. It works at reducing the military tension, allaying environmental threats, and narrowing the East–West gap in standards of living in the region. It was also part of the regionalization process underway in Europe as well as in the Arctic, turning previously peripheral border areas into places where governments can meet in a transnational forum serving a range of interests. Areas of particular concern are environmental protection, regional infrastructure, economic cooperation, science and technology, culture, tourism, health care, and the indigenous peoples of region.



Map 1.3 The Barents Euro-Arctic Region. *Source* Fridtjof Nansen Institute

As a political project, BEAR has had its ups and downs.¹¹ While ambitions were high during the formative years, creating viable cross-border business partnerships in the Barents region proved more difficult than anticipated. Ostensible successes ended in failure. In some notorious cases, the Russians simply forced their Western counterparts out once the joint company started to make a profit. As a result, BEAR downgraded large-scale business cooperation as a priority in the late 1990s, devoting its energies instead to small-scale business and people-to-people cooperation: student exchange, cultural projects, and other ventures bringing Russians and nationals of the Nordic countries together. BEAR set up a Barents Health Programme in 1999, focusing primarily on new and resurgent communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.¹² Both people-to-people cooperation and the Barents Health Programme are generally judged to be successful, and cooperation between small businesses has also been growing.

A Joint Norwegian–Soviet Commission on Environmental Protection was established in 1988.¹³ The previous year, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had held his famous “Murmansk speech”, where he urged the “civilization” of the militarized European Arctic in general and wider international cooperation on environmental protection in particular.¹⁴

The Soviet Pechenganikel nickel smelter had already ravaged the countryside on the Kola Peninsula (with visible damage also on the Norwegian side); the Joint Norwegian–Soviet Commission on Environmental Protection made it a top priority during the first few years of its existence to modernize Pechenganikel and reduce SO₂ emissions. By the early 1990s, nuclear safety had become the new priority. It was public knowledge that the Soviets had been dumping radioactive waste in the Barents and Kara Seas because they were overwhelmed by an ever-growing stockpile of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste on the Kola Peninsula. There was also mounting concern about safety at the Kola nuclear power plant, located in Polyarnye Zori in the southern parts of the Kola Peninsula. Norway launched a Plan of Action on nuclear safety in North-Western Russia in 1995, and three years later, a separate Joint Norwegian–Russian Commission on Nuclear Safety was established.¹⁵

While nuclear safety absorbed most of the funding earmarked for the environment under the bilateral environmental agreement between Norway and Russia, the Joint Norwegian–Russian Commission on Environmental Protection was promoting institutional cooperation between the two countries in areas such as pollution control, biodiversity, and protection of the cultural heritage. *Institutional* cooperation became the hallmark of the Commission around the mid-1990s. Emphasizing not only solutions to urgent environmental problems, the Commission also tried to build a workable system of cooperation between Norwegian and Russian environmental institutions. Norway was eager to help Russia strengthen its environmental bureaucracy, not least as regards specialist competence. Since the early 2000s, protecting the marine environment of the Barents Sea has been the main objective of the Commission. Its initial main priority, the modernization of the Pechenganikel combine, has not materialized.

*

The first years after the turn of the millennium saw little attention to the North in Norwegian foreign policy discourse. The northern waters were still seen as mainly a scene for Cold War theatre. Moreover, the previous decade's institutional collaboration with Russia showed signs of wear. BEAR had not produced the results many had hoped for in large-scale business cooperation between East and West. Norway's plan of action for nuclear safety in North-Western Russia was heavily criticized by the Norwegian public for spending too much money too quickly, again with

limited practical results. When the Conservative Government in early 2003 appointed an expert committee to evaluate opportunities and challenges in the North, this received little media attention. By many, the act was seen as a sop to Cold War romantics in the armed forces and the right-wing political establishment, who regretted that Norway's foreign policy was now mainly directed southwards—to mediation for peace and humanitarian aid in the Third World. The committee was headed by the director of the Norwegian Polar Institute and had representatives from academia, the state bureaucracy, business, the environmental movement, and indigenous peoples. Its report, published in December 2003, called for clarification in Norway's relationship with Russia through one overarching agreement that would solve all outstanding issues between the two countries—notably the delimitation line between their EEZs and the status of the seas around Svalbard.¹⁶ The committee also proposed removing the national tier of the BEAR collaboration, leaving only cooperation at the regional level, and instead strengthening bilateral collaboration with Russia and Norway's participation in the Arctic Council. It further recommended a steep increase in funding to develop Northern Norwegian science and businesses and suggested that money should be taken from the plan of action for nuclear safety in North-Western Russia. In sum, then, the committee proposed a change of course away from the 1990s' institutionalized partnerships with Russia, towards greater attention to circumpolar issues and the development of Northern Norwegian science, trade, and industry. The report was sharply criticized by political actors in Kirkenes, the town in Norway's north-eastern corner that had become the Norwegian "Barents capital" since the early 1990s. They condemned the scientific emphasis of the report, obviously fearing that funding and the political capital would be transferred to Tromsø, home to the Norwegian Polar Institute and the world's northernmost university.¹⁷

In April 2005, the Norwegian government responded to the report through a white paper on opportunities and challenges in the North, prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁸ It did not follow up the expert committee's proposals. There was no mention of abolishing the national tier of the BEAR, nor of downsizing assistance to nuclear safety in North-Western Russia. The white paper paid considerable attention to the challenges associated with the latter, as well as to jurisdictional issues in the Barents Sea. It briefly mentioned circumpolar collaboration and indigenous issues, without indicating any change of course.

In the time between the appointment of expert committee and the publication of the government white paper, a change had taken place in Norwegian public discourse. If the North had been considered “backwards” (linked to the Cold War and to Norway’s “polar past”) in early 2003, this was not the case two years later.¹⁹ A mounting euphoria about new opportunities in the North had emerged, led by Northern Norwegian businesspeople, retired military personnel, and the leading Northern Norwegian newspaper, *Nordlys*.²⁰ The latter regularly criticized the government for not recognizing the petroleum opportunities that were opening up in the Barents Sea, leaving the floor to political adversaries. Even worse, Norway’s traditional allies had already established ties with Russia in the North, leaving Norway on the sidelines. The Russian gas monopolist Gazprom had started development of the gigantic Shtokman gas and gas condensate field in the Barents Sea together with American oil companies, the argument went. This was not actually true, but the Russians had indeed opened up in 2003 for foreign participation in the Shtokman development. The upbeat atmosphere in Norway was reinforced by the dramatically increased traffic of Russian oil tankers along the Norwegian coastline from autumn 2002. Many seemed to believe that the Russians had already started drilling in the Barents Sea, and those advocating a heightened focus on the northern waters silently let the public believe so through hints and half-truths. In fact, the tankers were transporting oil from land-based fields further east in Russia due to capacity problems in existing pipelines. Nevertheless, the North became a major issue in the campaign leading up to Norway’s general elections in September 2005. While the northern waters had until then largely attracted the interest of right-wing politicians concerned with military security and economic interest (except the BEAR, which was the Labour Party’s “baby”), now even the leader of the Socialist Left Party declared that Norway’s most important foreign policy challenges were those in the North. The elections were won by a red–green coalition consisting of the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party, and the Centre (Agrarian) Party, and rising star Jonas Gahr Støre (the preferred assistant of erstwhile Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland and the party’s leader since 2014) became minister of foreign affairs. He had studied the challenges associated with the Shtokman development at the Oslo think tank Econ, rode on a mounting wave of northern euphoria and used his excellent rhetorical skills to declare himself Mr. North of Norwegian politics (despite himself having a bourgeois background from Oslo West).

When Gahr Støre took office, it had just become known that the two major Norwegian oil companies, Statoil and Hydro, were on Gazprom's shortlist for the Shtokman project (in addition to American Chevron, ConocoPhillips, and French Total). In what was arguably the most famous political speech in Norway since the turn of the millennium, Johan Gahr Støre, speaking in Tromsø, convincingly declared the North the number one priority of Norwegian foreign policy.

In early autumn 2006, events took an unexpected turn. Gazprom suddenly declared that it would not have any foreign partners in the Shtokman development, but it would go alone instead. When the Norwegian government announced its strategy on the High North in December that year, the Shtokman issue did not figure prominently.²¹ Now, the northern areas—or the High North, which became the official English translation of the Norwegian term *nordområdene*—are declared a “national priority”. The strategy lists all thinkable challenges in the region, ranging from environmental protection and indigenous issues to the business opportunities associated with future offshore petroleum extraction in the Barents Sea. It erases the dividing line between foreign and national policies and stresses the development of Norway's northern regions mainly in terms of science and business.

This was followed up in the strategy's “step two” in spring 2009, *New Building Blocks in the High North*, a purely domestic-policy document.²² The main topic here was the establishment of a new scientific centre on climate change and the environment in Tromsø. FRAM—High North Research Centre for Climate and the Environment (the Fram Centre)—was opened in 2010, with the Norwegian Polar Institute as its main constituent body. The 2014 Strategy, *The North Globe*, similarly focused on the domestic side of Norwegian High North politics, arguably with an even stronger emphasis on business development than its predecessors.²³ The 2017 *High North Strategy: between Geopolitics and Community Development* was published jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation.²⁴ Priorities throughout are business development, infrastructure, education and research, environmental safety, and preparedness.

*

“Quietly, and almost unbeknownst to the general public, the Arctic has emerged during the 1980s as a strategic arena of vital importance to both of the superpowers”. This is how Oran R. Young, generally considered to

be the leading international expert on Arctic politics, opened his (1985) article "The Age of the Arctic" (p. 160).²⁵ He was indeed right in his predictions about the world's growing interest in the Arctic, even though the most ground-breaking event in this process—the dismantling of the Cold War—was yet to happen. Following the end of the Cold War, European governments were keen to draw the young Russian Federation into new forms of transnational institutional arrangements aimed at reducing the potential for future East–West conflict. As we saw above, BEAR was established on Norwegian initiative in 1993, and five years later, the EU Northern Dimension was launched, on Finnish initiative. These regional collaborative arrangements spanned several functional fields, with infrastructure, business cooperation, and environmental protection at the core. At the circumpolar level, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) was created in 1990 by the "Arctic eight" (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Soviet Union, and the USA). Canada soon proposed the establishment of an Arctic Council, to embrace policies on indigenous peoples in addition to the environmental focus of AEPS. The USA initially opposed this, but then agreed, on conditions that the new council would be established through a non-binding agreement, that the states would not commit to financial contributions, and that secretarial functions would be reduced to a minimum. The Ottawa Declaration of 19 September 1996 created the Arctic Council, with the AEPS programmes subsumed under the new structure. Indigenous peoples' associations representing several indigenous groups within one Arctic state or one indigenous people in several Arctic states were included in the Council as "permanent participants".

Three years into the Arctic Council's existence, Scrivener (1999, p. 57) concluded that creating the Council seemed "to have done nothing to increase the momentum of circumpolar cooperation on pollution and conservation issues and to assist the AEPS's progression beyond monitoring and assessment into the realm of policy action". By and large, Arctic cooperation—whether circumpolar or regional—was long considered to be "a thing of the early 1990s": an immediate post-Cold War initiative that failed to spark sustainable high-level political interest. The Arctic Council remained a forum for coordinating Arctic environmental monitoring and science, with strong participation from the region's indigenous peoples, while the regional BEAR collaboration and the EU Northern Dimension were struggling to meet the initial expectations of thriving East–West cooperation on trade and industry.²⁶

Much changed with the planting of a Russian flag on the seabed at the North Pole in August 2007. That action was performed by a Russian scientific expedition involved in collecting data for Russia's submission to the UN Continental Shelf Commission—in accordance with the law of the sea—but was widely perceived as a Russian demonstration of power in the Arctic. The incident happened at the same time as the summer ice melting in the Arctic Ocean reached ominous proportions, and there was growing interest in the prospects of petroleum development in the Arctic. Borgerson (2008) famously captured the atmosphere in his seminal article “Arctic Meltdown”: “The Arctic Ocean is melting, and it is melting fast. [...] It is no longer a matter of if, but when, the Arctic Ocean will open to regular marine transportation and exploration of its lucrative natural-resource deposits” (p. 63). Further: “The situation is especially dangerous because there are currently no overarching political or legal structures that can provide for the orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreements over Arctic resources or sea-lanes” (p. 71); and “[T]he Arctic countries are likely to unilaterally grab as much territory as possible and exert sovereign control over opening sea-lanes wherever they can. In this legal no man's land, Arctic states are pursuing their narrowly defined national interests by laying down sonar nets and arming icebreakers to guard their claims” (pp. 73–74).

Russia's flag-planting and Borgerson's article spurred a new wave of high-level political interest in the Arctic, even though the former had not been intended as a Russian “claim” to the North Pole. There emerged a global media buzz about a “scramble for the Arctic”, and a marked surge in political interest could be observed. In the Arctic Council, high-level participation from the member states gradually increased, and the 2011 biannual ministerial meeting in Nuuk was the first to which all eight countries sent their foreign affairs ministers. It was also the first Arctic Council meeting attended by the US Secretary of State, and here, the first binding treaty negotiated under the Arctic Council—on search and rescue in the Arctic—was signed. The interest of non-Arctic states in Arctic affairs was also heightened, especially among Asian nations. In 2013, China, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea, among others, were given status as permanent observers in the Arctic Council.

This story of the race to the Arctic ran at the same time as the most exhaustive scientific study of the Arctic seabed to date was under way. The Arctic states had only a few years to spare before they had to submit their evidence and applications to the Shelf Commission. Expeditions

were often portrayed in the media as the prelude to unilateral governmental action in the Arctic. “Denmark lays claim to the North Pole”, the Norwegian media told the public repeatedly in 2010–2011.²⁷ Although the Arctic is not a barren wilderness without governance or rule of law, you could be forgiven for thinking it was from its portrayal in the media. In any event, this sort of publicity was unsettling for the five Arctic states—Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Russia, and the USA (Alaska)—all of whom had a vested interest in making sure the existing law of the sea rules on continental shelves and their delimitation extended to the Arctic as well. That being the case, the Arctic shelf could only be divided among the five; no other state would have a rightful claim. As of writing, no government has said it will not respect the law of the sea in the Arctic, but specialists in ocean law and NGOs (such as WWF) have nevertheless urged the international community to adopt a dedicated Arctic treaty.²⁸ The European Parliament likewise floated the idea of a separate treaty, but later changed its mind. The “Arctic five” therefore held a summit at Ilulissat on Greenland in May 2008 where they declared that the extant law of the sea applies in the Arctic, as elsewhere—there is no need for a new Arctic treaty.²⁹ Although no one had doubted their position, by issuing a formal declaration, they managed to send a clear message to the outside world.

Hence, these developments at the international level triggered the most pivotal Norwegian national interest in the High North (besides security), namely marine jurisdiction. While Norway does not lay claim on the continental shelf in the Central Arctic Ocean—and actually gained approval by the UN Continental Shelf Commission in 2009 for its rather modest claim of a sliver of the shelf North of the 200-mile limit from Svalbard³⁰—any “internationalization” of the Arctic is viewed with scepticism. Therefore, Norway has been a fervent defender of the established law of the sea in the Arctic, arguing against a new overarching “Arctic treaty” that might question or modify the established order. At the same time, these developments have presented a new opportunity for Norway to establish itself as a regional power, thereby also polishing its old brand as a Polar nation. A clear expression of this was Norway’s efforts to have the newly established Permanent Secretariat of the Arctic Council located to Tromsø, Norway’s Arctic “capital”, which it achieved in 2013. The secretariats of three of the Council’s working groups were also placed there. Everything Arctic is suddenly cultivated—the University of Tromsø accordingly changed its name to the Arctic University of Norway, also in 2013.

Furthermore, this new “Arctic wave” provided a vent for Norwegian High North ambitions in the aftermath of Crimea crisis and the following mutual sanctions between Russia and the West. Although both countries agreed to shield the established cooperation structures in the High North from the sanctions, high-level political contact was broken and bilateral trade hit hard. Hence, more attention was given to relations with other Arctic states, and the Arctic Council became an even more important platform for East–West dialogue as Russia remained a constructive partner there. Norway’s renewed circumpolar brand was also reflected in the fact that a white paper on Norwegian interests in the *Antarctic* was issued in 2015, the first one in three-quarters of a century.³¹

*

Norway’s current strategies on the High North contain elements of four layers that have predominated in various time periods during the last decades:

- The High North as an arena for great-power politics (mainly a legacy from the Cold War);
- The High North as an arena for institutionalized collaboration with Russia (mainly a legacy from the 1990s);
- The High North as a “national project” (mainly a legacy from the mid-2000s);
- The High North as an arena for circumpolar politics (present throughout the period, but increasingly since around 2010).

The relationship with Russia ranks above most other concerns in Norway’s High North policy. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union represented the Russian bear, in whose company small-state Norway could never allow itself to feel secure. Nevertheless, a fruitful collaboration developed between the two parties in the management of marine resources in the Barents Sea, jurisdictional disagreement notwithstanding. In the 1990s, Russia became the impoverished recipient of humanitarian aid from Norway. Now, after the turn of the millennium, the Russian bear has re-emerged with both financial and military clout. The internal debate in Norway towards the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century centred on the continuation of financial support to Russian institutions and civil society. Shouldn’t a country that could manage to re-arm itself also be expected to take responsibility

for its environment and health services?³² Moreover, Russia was assuming a new role as a potential market and business partner for Norway. Participation in the Shtokman development was arguably the main driving force behind Norway's "new" northern policies from around 2005. Thus, we see that Russia played the main role in Norway's High North policies during the Cold War, in the 1990s and also in the main after the turn of the millennium.

Actors concerned with Norway's security have in recent years found common ground with those mainly interested in investments and better possibilities for Northern Norwegian business. These actors focus on Norway's "near abroad" in the Barents Sea region, generally seeing presence in the North—whether in the form of naval vessels or increased population—as a good in itself. Regional politicians, media, and business representatives have found allies in national top politicians concerned about Statoil's access to new resources, preferably in the "near abroad" so that regional trade and industry can also achieve ripple effects. While there is a certain cleavage between actors located close to the border with Russia and elsewhere in Northern Norway, mainly the regional capital of Tromsø, the common emphasis is on Norwegian interests. Norway's relationship with Russia is centre stage here, but also security- and economy-related relations with other states are considered important. The old jurisdictional conflict over the Fishery Protection Zone around Svalbard disrupted again in early 2017, when EU gave its vessels permission to fish the newly emerged Snow Crab in the zone, without Norway's consent. The oldest layer of modern Norwegian High North politics was thus reignited, and the outcome is at the time of writing (spring 2017) unknown.

An interest group that in part competes with those primarily oriented towards security and economic interest (only to a limited extent, as the common interest is also highly visible) consists of those arguing for a greater focus on circumpolar cooperation, which thematically is often leaning towards science, environmental protection, and indigenous issues. As noted, the 2003 High North Committee had proposed downplaying BEAR collaboration and nuclear safety projects in Russia (though it, too, favoured strong emphasis on relations with Russia and considerable new investments in Northern Norway), and was criticized for being mainly concerned about "counting polar bears and ice flakes".³³ The committee's report is often referred to—despite its explicit call for investments in Northern Norway—as a document that places the

focus of Norway's foreign policy off in the distance, if not on humanitarian action in the Third World, then on indigenous and environmental concerns somewhere in the far-off Arctic. It is seen as defending the narrow interests of scientists from the Norwegian Polar Institute, keen to participate in Arctic Council-initiated activities across the circumpolar North. The establishment of the Fram Centre on Polar environmental and climate research in Tromsø in 2010 also led many to conclude that science was the winner in the "new" Norwegian politics of the High North. Whereas Russia (whether as regards delimitation line discussions, settlement of fish quotas, or the opening of the Shtokman field—and eventually: aggressor in the Crimea crisis) was definitely a moving target, scientific infrastructure in the North was safely within the control of Norwegian central authorities. The international "Arctic wave" that followed the Russian flag planting on the North Pole in 2007 served to split Norwegian High North strategies into two even more clearly delineated geographical directions: on the domestic scene: away from the border town of Kirkenes to the new "Arctic capital" of Tromsø; on the international scene: away from Russia into the circumpolar world of the Arctic Council. Different dimensions of the Norwegian High North strategies are cultivated depending on the international political dimensions, but they all converge in the image of High North politics as a "national project".

NOTES

1. The chapter draws on several years of research on Norwegian High North politics, published by the author in a series of books in Norwegian; see, in particular, Hønneland (2005, 2006, 2012), Hønneland and Jensen (2008), and Hønneland and Rowe (2010). The BEAR collaboration is discussed in Stokke and Hønneland (2007). Reference to primary material in this chapter is generally limited to direct citations and the most central public documents. The chapter builds on Hønneland (2014a, b, 2017).
2. "Avtale mellom Regjeringen i Unionen av Sovjetiske Sosialistiske Republiker og Regjeringen i Kongeriket Norge om samarbeid innen fiskerinæringen" ["Agreement between the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway on Cooperation within the Fishing Industry"]. In *Overenskomster med fremmede stater* ["Agreements with Foreign States"]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1975, pp. 546–549.
3. See Hønneland (2012) for an elaboration.

4. "Avtale mellom Norge og Sovjetunionen om en midlertidig praktisk ordning for fisket i et tilstøtende område i Barentshavet med tilhørende protokoll og erklæring" ["Agreement between Norway and the Soviet Union on a Temporary Practical Arrangement for the Fisheries in an Adjacent Area of the Barents Sea with Appurtenant Protocol and Declaration"]. *Overenskomster med fremmede stater* ["Agreements with Foreign States"]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1978, p. 436.
5. "Treaty between Norway and the Russian Federation concerning Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean". In *Overenskomster med fremmede stater* ["Agreements with Foreign States"]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011, p. 575.
6. For a thorough examination of the legal aspects of the Fishery Protection Zone, see Ulfstein (1995). A discussion of the legality of fisheries regulations in the zone is provided by Molenaar (2012).
7. "Traktat angående Spitsbergen (Svalbardtraktaten)" ["Treaty Concerning Spitsbergen (The Svalbard Treaty)"]. In *Overenskomster med fremmede stater* ["Agreements with Foreign States"]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1920, p. 551.
8. The strongest opposition to the Protection Zone has come from the UK. The USA, Germany, and France have formally just reserved their position, which implies that they are still considering their views. Finland declared its support to the Protection Zone in 1976, but has since not repeated it. Canada also expressed its support to the Norwegian position in a bilateral fisheries agreement in 1995, but this agreement has not entered into force. These other Western countries generally accept that the waters surrounding Svalbard are under Norwegian jurisdiction, but they claim that this jurisdiction must be carried out in accordance with the Svalbard Treaty (Pedersen 2008, 2009a, b, 2011). Russia, on the other hand, formally considers the waters around Svalbard to be high seas (Vylegzhanin and Zilanov 2007). In practice, however, Russia has accepted Norwegian enforcement of fisheries regulations in the Svalbard Zone (Hønneland 1998a, 2012).
9. *The Kirkenes Declaration from the Conference of Foreign Ministers on Co-operation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region*. Signed in Kirkenes, 11 January 1993.
10. The Sámi are the only indigenous people found in all four countries in the region. On the Russian side, the Nenets in Nenets Autonomous Okrug and the Veps in the Republic of Karelia also enjoy status as indigenous peoples.
11. A discussion of the BEAR cooperation at the time it was established is found in Stokke and Tunander (1994), while the achievements of the collaboration a decade later are discussed in Stokke and Hønneland (2007).

12. See Hønneland and Rowe (2004, 2005).
13. *Overenskomst mellom Kongeriket Norges Regjering og Unionen av Sovjetiske Sosialistiske Republikkers Regjering om samarbeid på miljøvernområdet* ["Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Norway and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Cooperation within the Field of Environmental Protection"], signed in Oslo 15 January 1988. Oslo: Ministry of the Environment.
14. Gorbachev's Murmansk initiative is presented in Åtland (2008).
15. "Avtale mellom Norge og Russland om miljøvernssamarbeid i forbindelse med opphugging av russiske atomdrevne undervannsbåter som er tatt ut av marinens tjeneste i nordregionen og styrking av kjerne- og strålingssikkerhet" ["Agreement between Norway and Russia on Environmental Cooperation in Connection with the Dismantling of Russian Nuclear-Powered Submarines Withdrawn from the Navy's Service in the Northern Region, and the Enhancement of Nuclear and Radiation Safety"]. *Overenskomster med fremmede stater* ["Agreements with Foreign States"]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1998, p. 568. See Hønneland (2003) for a discussion.
16. "Mot nord!: utfordringer og muligheter i nordområdene" ["To the North!: Opportunities and Challenges in the High North"]. *Norges offentlige utredninger: NOU 2003:32* ["Norwegian Official Reports: NOU 2003:32"]. Oslo: Statens forvaltningstjeneste, Informasjonsforvaltning ["Norwegian Public Management and Information Services"], 2003.
17. See Hønneland and Jensen (2008) and Jensen and Hønneland (2011) for an overview of the debate.
18. *St.meld. nr. 30 (2004–2005) Muligheter og utfordringer i nord* ["White Paper No. 30 (2004–2005) Opportunities and Challenges in the North"]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005.
19. A quantitative investigation of Norwegian newspapers during the 2000s shows that usage of the word *nordområdene* (the High North) grew five-fold from 2003 to 2004 (Jensen and Hønneland 2011, p. 41).
20. The High North euphoria is discussed in Hønneland and Jensen (2008) and Jensen and Hønneland (2011). See also Chap. 4 in this book.
21. *Regjeringens nordområdestrategi* ["The Government's High North Strategy"]. Oslo: Government of Norway and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006. The Shtokman issue took yet another new turn in summer 2007, when Total was invited back in, and soon thereafter StatoilHydro (merged Statoil and Hydro, since 2009 operating under the name Statoil). Total and Statoil had no ownership to the resources; however, their role was limited to that of partners in the development project. In the end, nothing came out of that project. Changes in the international

gas market have served to heighten insecurities in this respect. In the Norwegian public debate, the 2010 delimitation line has largely ousted Shtokman as the big promise for the future. Although it will take some time for things to actually happen, there are expectations that the former disputed area contains extractable hydrocarbon resources. So far, results on the Norwegian shelf in the Barents Sea have been rather disappointing, and resources on the Russian side of the border are arguably much larger. So, the Norwegians still place considerable hope on off-shore petroleum collaboration in the Barents Sea, which has remained an important driving force in Norway's High North policy. These issues are further discussed in Chaps. 4 and 5.

22. *Nye byggesteiner i nord: Neste trinn i Regjeringens nordområdestrategi* ["New Building Blocks in the North: the Next Step in the Government's High North Strategy"]. Oslo: Government of Norway, 2009.
23. *Nordkloden* ["The North Globe"]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014.
24. *Nordområdestrategi: mellom geopolittikk og samfunnsutvikling* ["High North Strategy: between Geopolitics and Community Development"], Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2017.
25. This section builds on Hønneland (2014b).
26. See Hønneland (1998b) and Browning (2010).
27. See, for instance, www.nrk.no, 17 May 2011.
28. See, for instance, Rothwell (2008).
29. *Ilulissat Declaration*. 2008. Signed at the Arctic Ocean Conference, Ilulissat, Greenland, 27–29 May 2008.
30. See Jensen (2010) for a discussion of the Norwegian claim.
31. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2015. *Meld. St. 32 (2014–2015) Norske interesser og politikk i Antarktis* ["White Paper No. 32 (2014–2015) Norwegian Interests and Politics in the Antarctica"], Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
32. My colleague Lars Rowe has been a major advocate of this view in the Norwegian public. See our joint debate book (Rowe et al. 2015).
33. As expressed by Finnmark District Governor Helga Pedersen to the regional newspaper *Nordlys* on 9 December 2003.

REFERENCES

- Åtland, Kristian. 2008. Mikhail Gorbachev, the Murmansk Initiative, and the Desecuritization of Interstate Relations in the Arctic. *Cooperation and Conflict* 43: 289–311.
- Borgerson, Scott S. 2008. Arctic Meltdown: The Economic and Security Implications of Global Warming. *Foreign Affairs* 87: 63–77.

- Browning, Christopher S. 2010. The Region-Building Approach Revisited: The Continued Othering of Russia in Discourses of Region-Building in the European North. *Geopolitics* 8: 45–71.
- Hønneland, Geir. 1998a. Compliance in the Fishery Protection Zone around Svalbard. *Ocean Development and International Law* 29: 339–360.
- Hønneland, Geir. 1998b. Identity Formation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. *Cooperation and Conflict* 33: 277–297.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2003. *Russia and the West: Environmental Co-operation and Conflict*. London: Routledge.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2005. *Barentsbrytninger: norsk nordområdepolitikk etter den kalde krigen* [Barents Refractions: Norwegian High North Politics after the End of the Cold War]. Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2006. *Kvotekamp og kyststatssolidaritet: norsk-russisk fiskeriforvaltning gjennom 30 år* [Quota Battles and Coastal State Solidarity: Norwegian–Russian Fisheries Management through 30 Years]. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2012. *Making Fishery Agreements Work: Post-Agreement Bargaining in the Barents Sea*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2014a. Norway's High Arctic Policy. In *International Relations and the Arctic: Understanding Policy and Governance*, edited by Robert W. Murray and Anita Dey Nuttall. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2014b. From 'the Age of the Arctic' to 'the Scramble for the Arctic'. In *Research Collection on the Politics of the Arctic*, edited by Geir Hønneland. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2017. Norway and the High North: Foreign Policy Strategies Since the Cold War. *Current Politics and Economics of Europe* 28: 31–54.
- Hønneland, Geir, and Lars Rowe. 2004. *Health as International Politics: Combating Communicable Diseases in the Baltic Sea Region*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Hønneland, Geir, and Lars Rowe. 2005. Western vs. Post-Soviet Medicine: Fighting Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in North-West Russia and the Baltic States. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 21: 395–415.
- Hønneland, Geir, and Lars Rowe. 2010. *Nordområdene – hva nå?* [The High North: What Now?]. Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag.
- Hønneland, Geir, and Leif Christian Jensen. 2008. *Den nye nordområdepolitikken* [The New Politics on the High North]. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Jensen, Leif Christian, and Geir Hønneland. 2011. Framing the High North: Public Discourses in Norway after 2000. *Acta Borealia* 28: 37–54.
- Jensen, Øystein. 2010. Towards Setting the Outer Limits of the Continental Shelf in the Arctic: On the Norwegian Submission and Recommendations of the Commission. In *Law, Technology and Science for Oceans in Globalisation*:

- IUU Fishing, Oil Pollution, Bioprospecting, Outer Continental Shelf*, edited by Davor Vidas. Leiden and Boston, MA: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Molenaar, Erik Jaap. 2012. Fisheries Regulation in the Maritime Zones of Svalbard. *International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law* 27: 3–58.
- Pedersen, Torbjørn. 2008. The Constrained Politics of the Svalbard Offshore Area. *Marine Policy* 32: 913–919.
- Pedersen, Torbjørn. 2009a. Norway's Rule on Svalbard: Tightening the Grip on the Arctic Islands. *Polar Record* 45: 147–152.
- Pedersen, Torbjørn. 2009b. Denmark's Policies toward the Svalbard Area. *Ocean Development and International Law* 40: 319–332.
- Pedersen, Torbjørn. 2011. International Law and Politics in U.S. Policymaking: The United States and the Svalbard Dispute. *Ocean Development and International Law* 42: 120–135.
- Rothwell, Donald. 2008. The Arctic in International Affairs: Time for a New Regime? *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 15: 241–253.
- Rowe, Lars, Jørgen Holten Jørgensen, and Geir Hønneland. 2015. *Vårt bilde av Russland* [Our Image of Russia]. Bergen: John Grieg.
- Scrivener, David. 1999. Arctic Cooperation in Transition. *Polar Record* 35: 51–58.
- Stokke, Olav Schram, and Geir Hønneland (eds.). 2007. *International Cooperation and Arctic Governance: Regime Effectiveness and Northern Region Building*. London: Routledge.
- Stokke, Olav Schram, and Ola Tunander (eds.). 1994. *The Barents Region: Cooperation in Arctic Europe*. London: Sage.
- Ullstein, Geir. 1995. *The Svalbard Treaty: From Terra Nullius to Norwegian Sovereignty*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
- Vylegzhanin, A.N., and V.K. Zilanov. 2007. *Spitsbergen: Legal Regime of Adjacent Marine Areas*. Utrecht: Eleven International Publishing.
- Young, Oran R. 1985. The Age of the Arctic. *Foreign Policy* 61: 160–179.

The Great Barents Awakening

Abstract Norway's foreign policy in the European Arctic during the 1990s was mainly about bringing Russia into committing collaborative networks. Bilateral cooperative arenas were developed and expanded in areas such as environmental protection, nuclear safety, and fisheries management. The hallmark of the new times was the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, which on Norwegian initiative formalized cooperation in a number of functional fields between Russia and the Nordic countries. The aim of the initiative was to counter military tension, reduce the threat to the environment, and narrow the gap in living standards between people in the Nordic countries and Russia. This chapter describes how Norwegian authorities went about this region-building project, assuming that regions can be "talked and written into existence".

Keywords Norwegian Arctic politics · Norwegian High North politics
Barents region

Around the mid-1990s, I suddenly found myself attending conferences on the Barents Region. I had just graduated in political science and started in a new job as a researcher, but I already had a few years as a Russian interpreter to my name. Awestruck, I found a place in the hall where everybody on two legs in the European Arctic seemed to be in attendance: ministry officials, county politicians, journalists, and social scientists. Coincidentally, I had begun studying Russian just at the

moment the Soviet Union was opening up to the outside world, and I passed my master's degree the same year as the multilateral Barents cooperation project came into being, in 1993. I'd been hoping to be part of the pioneering work about to unfold in the High North.

I soon got to know the setting and dramaturgy of these conferences: the slightly hectic atmosphere, the excited participants, the palpable frisson. Ministry officials had travelled North from Oslo to unveil the Barents Region as the country's new major foreign policy commitment. Regional politicians ostentatiously welcomed their Russian neighbours back into the northern fold—and shed an occasional tear reminiscing about their forefathers' struggle to survive and the songs of their foremothers. It was the political scientists and geographers that drew the diagrams and did the explanations: about transboundary cooperation, infrastructure, and integration. It was the local business community that made off with the main prize: a huge, hungry Russian market. There were photographer-journalists who shot pictures and made notes, who sent reports to their newsrooms about the giant strides being taken in the North. The Rica Arctic Hotel in Kirkenes was enjoying a record season. And in the front row sat the Russians, mute and besuited.

Seventy years of Soviet rule and closed borders in the North were now, the message went, a historical parenthesis. United again, Russians and Scandinavians could resurrect the close and trusting ties that had existed before the 1917 Russian Revolution, when it didn't matter if you were Norwegian, Russian, Sámi, or Finn—you were a Northerner and a neighbour, and that was that. Borders would now be opened again and Norwegian and Russian citizens of the North would rediscover how similar they really were, formed down the centuries by barren landscapes, a harsh northern climate and the unavoidable traumas of living in the periphery. Political scientists spoke enthusiastically about transnational collaboration in border regions as the new trend in Europe, about synergies and centrifugal forces. Geographers were particularly energetic, smiling broadly as they unfurled charts with pyramids and telling the audience that with sufficient infrastructure at the bottom of the pyramid, cross-border commerce and human relations would follow, just as superstructure follows base. Language training and logistics would remove whatever might be left of Soviet sand in the machinery of collaboration.

And I thought: What about the Russian factor?

*

The northern regions had obviously been a serious concern in Norwegian foreign policy long before the Barents cooperation was conceived. It was a question of national security after all, and it was in the North everything was happening. Norway and its neighbour, the Soviet Union, were on opposite sides of the Cold War barrier between NATO and the Warsaw Pact; the Kola Peninsula was generally held to be the world's most militarized zone. Apart from this, the Barents Sea had seen both conflict and friendship between the Soviet bear and its Norwegian neighbour. The maritime boundary and Svalbard zone: on these questions, the parties still stood some distance apart. That said, the Joint Norwegian–Russian Fisheries Commission, established in 1976, was a rare example of a formalized East–West collaborative body in the Arctic during the Cold War.

When the Berlin Wall fell in the autumn of 1989, the Norwegian–Soviet border was already changing from an impenetrable physical barricade to bustling conduit of international contact. In 1985, the relatively young and very dynamic Mikhail Gorbachev had taken the helm of the Soviet Communist Party and two years later had given his famous “Murmansk speech” in which he spoke of the importance of protecting the natural environment and normalizing the highly militarized North. People in the Nordic countries were soon racing to come up with the smartest idea to include Russia in binding conventions with the outside world, that is, the Western hemisphere, and reap whatever economic benefits the East produced, but above all prevent the bankrupt world power from spiralling into an economic abyss or into fits of madness. The Finns were thinking about an expanded Calotte region, an extension eastwards of the established North Calotte cooperation, where Russia's Nordic neighbours had been coming for decades to make merry, sing, and joust. The Norwegians beat Helsinki to it, and by April 1992, Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg was ready to throw his trump card onto the table. Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was on board—and the baby would be named the *Barents Region*.

The Euro-Arctic Barents Region was created with due pomp and circumstance in the Norwegian border town of Kirkenes in January 1993; the political glitterati from East and West, North and South sparkled in attendance: foreign ministers from of a large handful of northern

European countries, Messrs Kozyrev and Stoltenberg of course, and representation from most of the great powers of the day. The name had not been chosen without careful consideration. “Barents” alluded obviously to the adjacent marine areas while also clearly indicating where the idea had originated. Of the four potential parties to the expanded North Calotte—all of which were now becoming Barents countries—only Norway and Russia had borders on the Barents Sea. But “Euro”, where had that come from? While the documentation is patchy, “everyone knows” it was the brainchild of the Norwegian Labour Party—championed not least by arch EU supporter Stoltenberg in a bid to give everything smacking of “Euro” a positive spin in the run-up to Norway’s second EU referendum. The pig-headed Northerner would get something to think about, or at least be challenged at a subconscious level. Isn’t “Euro” ultimately a good thing, something that not only creates associations with Belgium and pizza countries (a steward on a coastguard vessel I served on refused to serve “EU food”, that is pasta and pizza, during the heated EU referendum campaign in 1994), but to *détente*, northern lights and transboundary happiness—a bit like dancing around the Berlin Wall?

The aim of the multilateral Barents project, as it was seen in 1993, was to counter military tension, reduce the threat to the environment, and narrow the gap in living standards between people in the Nordic countries and Russia. Three keywords tended to be highlighted as general objectives in the time that followed: normalization, demilitarization, and regionalization. As we saw in Chap. 1, the border between East and West in the North would be like the border between the Nordic countries and their other European neighbours (“normalization”). Military tensions would be reduced (“demilitarization”). And the Barents partnership would be seen in the light of a broader political process in Europe where regions were attempting to increase their influence vis-à-vis central authorities (“regionalization”), not least transnational regions where governments and commerce in different countries had created transboundary clusters.

What was more, the Barents Region would become an identity region—a region whose population had a distinct sense of “us”, as opposed to “them”, people outside the region. It would be a functional region, a region characterized by extensive trade and other cross-border business. In the effort to turn the Barents Region into an identity region, advocates frequently highlighted what was known as the Pomor

trade between Northern Norway and areas around Arkhangelsk before the 1917 Russian Revolution. In essence, the Pomor trade involved the exchange of Russian flour for Norwegian fish while also enabling a measure of East–West socializing, eventually giving rise to a form of pidgin Russo-Norwegian—*moya po tvoya*: me and you.¹ The history of the Pomors was supposed to show that the free movement of goods and comradely cross-border intercourse constituted the natural state of the High North. Historic Kola Norwegians were used for all they were worth as yet more proof that we were all in the same Barents boat. The descendants of the pre-Revolutionary Norwegian colony on the Rybachy Peninsula close to the Norwegian border—a dozen Norwegian families settled there in the late 1800s—would now have an opportunity to return home. The government quickly adopted a repatriation programme: a rare occurrence in Norwegian immigration policy. The Ministry of Local Government was hardly overjoyed, but foreign policy eclipsed all other concerns. A region would be built and the Russian threat tamed.

*

Institutionally, the multilateral Barents project has both a national and a regional anchoring. At the national level, the Euro-Arctic Barents Council is the highest body, the playground of governments at which foreign ministers—and often other ministers—from the entire Nordic realm get together along with representatives of the European Commission as well. A few handfuls of other respectable nations are permitted to observe proceedings, from Poland in the East and Italy in the South to Canada and the USA in the West. But it is the regions that occupy centre stage: counties in Northern Norway, Sweden and Finland, north-west Russian provinces, republics, and autonomous regions. We are talking about the counties of Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark in Norway, Västerbotten and Norrbotten in Sweden, Lapland in Finland, etc., along with Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, and Karelia with adjacent gems on the Eastern side of the old Iron Curtain: originally seven, currently thirteen. The Barents Regional Council is their stamping ground—a small handful of indigenous peoples are also included: Sámi, Nenets, and Vepsians. While the Barents Council lays down the general parameters at the national level, the regional council is more of a hands-on body. It initiates and executes periodical and sectoral Barents programmes in close consultation with a preparatory regional committee. Individual

countries have adopted their own Barents secretariats to handle project cooperation in the region. Norway, first out in the rotating presidency, had wanted the secretariat in Kirkenes to be recognized as a permanent hub of the transnational partnership, but the other countries were quick to create similar organizations when they were in the driving seat, albeit on a smaller scale and with closer ties to regional authorities. In 2007, however, an international coordinating secretariat was established in Kirkenes, alongside the Norwegian national secretariat.

The mandate of the regional partnership included economic, trade, science and technology, tourism, environment, infrastructure, education and cultural exchange issues, and steps to improve the situation of indigenous people in the area. As far as I could see from my new research desk in the Northern Norwegian capital of Tromsø in the mid-1990s, the first Barents programme was a smorgasbord of desired projects into which the four member states could pour money at will; the glossy brochure was comprehensive and detailed at least. We peddled our expertise in humble researcher mode while the Barents Secretariat, which held the Norwegian purse strings, indicated what it wanted us to do. I ended up as a hired consultant for the regional council's cultural committee; its approach was pragmatic and professional. From the higher echelons, a decree had been sent forth, however, to irrigate every Barents project with a smattering of environmentalism, whether it was a new road or potato, a sculpture, winter games, or violins. Give environmental awareness the boogie-woogie treatment. "Culture as a creator of identity" was the title of my report, or something like it—in good region-building spirit.

Buzz words were doing the rounds: Barents cafés, Pomor pubs, Gorbie discos. As a young coastguard officer in the early 1990s, I visited them all. I was like a Russian under Perestroika, intoxicated by the Zeitgeist. On my first Soviet trip on the Trans-Siberian Railway in the summer of 1988, I experienced for the only time in my thirty-year-long career some degree of optimism among Russians about the future of their country. I was no wet blanket either with regard to Gorbie or my scientific aspirations. The future was here and now, snow white and bright: Northwards, Eastwards!

*

In discourse terms, Barents euphoria consisted of several layers. The first and most immediate was the euphoria generated by the idea of the

liberated Soviet citizen. We are talking about the success of the anti-communist liberation struggle in Europe: from the Velvet Revolution in Prague to Ceausescu's demise in the Romanian countryside. This was the people's revolt against cynical power brokers, celebrated with uninhibited dancing in the street and renewed faith in humanity. It was soon the turn of the Soviet republics: freedom swept from the Baltics in the north-west to Central Asia in the south-east. Even the Russians could now rid themselves of the fog of communism and finally gain access to all that the modern world had to offer. And in the Barents Region, the lost sheep, Russia, could be shepherd back into the northern fold. There were Sámi and Pomor, Kola Nordics and Karelians—all Northerners as good as any. Just as the early Marxist-Leninists believed the nationalities of the Russian Empire would fuse into a completely new type of citizen, Soviet man, the Barents citizen would rise again in the boundless North, albeit in a far more playful version than the Soviet coal and steel variant. The new Barents citizen would have several hats to put on: grizzled Nenets at night, sophisticated cosmopolitan in daytime—local and global in one.

This surge of Barentian euphoria was used instrumentally by both national and regional actors—it was a textbook example of region building. Learning about theories of statehood and nation building belongs to first-year reading in political science. It's one thing to establish a formal state, another to build a nation, creating a sense in the population that they and no one else belong together. Usually, the state's elite unearths whatever's available of historical events and cultural traits to help fashion a notion of the “we” that belongs together within the state's borders, as opposed to the “them”, who exist on the other side. As the American social anthropologist and political scientist Benedict Anderson (1983) put it, nations are *imagined communities*. The region builder is the little brother of the nation builder; the mechanisms are the same. Regions are, in the words of Iver Neumann (1994, p. 59)—also he a social anthropologist and political scientist—“talked and written into existence”. Regions aren't some predetermined territory “just lying there” like naturally demarcated units based on physical contours, cultural commonalities, or power politics. Regions are what we make of them, and they are created in text and speech. It will always be possible to find supporting arguments that one or another geographical area constitutes a natural unit. It's often easiest to retrieve some incident from history, blow off the dust, and give it a symbolic function. As we saw, the Pomor trade filled this role in the Barents Region project, the Kola Norwegians likewise.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spearheaded this region-building exercise, but social scientists were brought onto the team from the first moment. On the basis of the Polar and Russia programmes at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, a dozen scientists were engaged in 1992/1993 to write on foreign policy visions and cross-border commercial prospects in the North. Similar research groups were soon created in Sweden and Finland, and the networks also added participants from the Russian side. A particularly important role would be given the geographers and their models of regional integration. Human geography is a far more common subject in neighbouring countries than it is in Norway, and it did more to stoke the sense of optimism than our own rather staid Russian studies. Reports and articles were written predicting how the development of infrastructure would lead to the integration of all kinds of other fields: cultural, social, and economic.² Although it was not part of the geographers' intention to issue predictions (although one might sometimes suspect that), their models made it into non-academic discourses on developments in the North and were seen as having a more empirically predictive message in political and business circles. People rallied enthusiastically behind plans to expand transportation and logistics in the North—new roads, railways, and airports. It was all needed, everyone seemed to agree, to clear away the last remnants of the Berlin Wall in North.

Government officials and business people in Northern Norway were eager to join the dance. Many would deny that the Barents Region was primarily a national initiative; after all, there was already a good deal of regional-level cooperation between Norway and Russia before Thorvald Stoltenberg launched his idea. But the initiative of the political elite in Norway to construct an official region with the participation of the national government was now a fact, so one might as well jump on the bandwagon. Visionary politicians, entrepreneurial traders, and reunification romantics in the South and North, together with geographers who were not exactly spoilt by such interest in their models, had set the agenda. With roads and industrial parks would the region be built.

*

In parallel with the nascent reunification discourse, another picture began to take shape of the Russians, a picture that became in the 1990s the dominant representation of North-Western Russia in the mind of the Norwegian public. I'm referring to the great misery discourse. When

Norwegian journalists gained access in the late 1980s to the previously relatively inaccessible Kola Peninsula, descriptions of the area defined a new standard in disaster dramatics. First came the images of the blackened tree stumps followed by stories of nuclear radiation hell. The causes were the contaminating nickel works at Pechenga near the Norwegian border and radioactive waste scattered across the Kola Peninsula. On the Norwegian side, scorched vegetation had been recorded as early as the mid-1970s. This was caused by short-lived, intense exposure to sulphur dioxide. In 1969, the Pechenga smelter had started importing ore from Norilsk in Siberia, which had a significantly higher sulphur content than the local ore. People in Sør-Varanger in Finnmark launched the campaign “Stop the death clouds from the Soviet Union” in the late 1980s, and modernization of the nickel plant headed the list of priorities when the Joint Norwegian–Soviet environmental commission was set up in 1988. Two years later, the Norwegian government allocated NOK 300 million to the renovation of the nickel plant (which incidentally never happened).

Soon, however, another and even more frightening threat emerged. Towards the end of 1990, rumours began to circulate about the dumping of radioactive waste in the Barents and Kara seas.³ The rumours were later confirmed by a commission of inquiry appointed by the Russian parliament. Storage depots for radioactive waste in North-Western Russia were full, and the Russians lacked the capacity to recycle the waste or send it out of the region. In addition to waste and spent nuclear fuel from the Northern Fleet’s operational submarines and the nuclear-powered icebreaker fleet were the nuclear reactors and waste from submarines decommissioned in compliance with the disarmament agreements, Russia had recently signed with the USA and others. On top of this, the 1986 Chernobyl disaster caused concerns as to whether other nuclear power stations in Eastern bloc countries were unsafe—there was one such plant in the town of Polyarnye Zori in the southern part of the Kola Peninsula. These safety concerns caused the Norwegian government to commission in 1995—at the behest of Parliament—an action plan on nuclear issues in areas adjacent to Norway in the North. The Nuclear Action Plan is still the most expensive programme of Norway’s High North policy and remains operational today.

The environmental disaster image is the cornerstone of the great misery discourse. “Sør-Varanger [the Norwegian municipality bordering Russia] will be a desert in 20 years!” wrote Friends of the Earth Norway

in 1990.⁴ “Chernobyl in our food basket”, the environmental NGO Bellona responded a few years later.⁵ It was all about moonscapes and ticking bombs. Or the children’s rhyme: “All the children were healthy except Ola, he’d been to Kola”.

Around the mid-1990s, stories of human suffering began to take over; the blackened stumps made room for street children, prostitutes, and tuberculosis. For a couple of kroner a day, you can give a small child in Murmansk a bowl of soup, said Thorvald Stoltenberg in a TV commercial for the Red Cross. Hunger compels Russia’s proud daughters into prostitution, wrote the media. There wasn’t much else a young girl from Murmansk could do, obviously. (For the record: there was.)

*

The misery discourse gave the Norwegians the opportunity to play the role of Good Samaritan; Russia in 1992 welcomed anyone who felt they had something to contribute. Among the Western countries queuing up at the border with bread and circuses was also Norway. The circus was organized mainly by the Americans, with everything from patronizing lectures on democracy to glitzy shows to encourage the adoption of the market economy in the workplace. Norway was one of the countries delivering large quantities of “bread”, albeit laced with a small dose of circus. “Across the country, several NGOs are busily collecting food, clothing, medicines and medical supplies etc. for small and large places in Eastern Europe”, said the government’s white paper heralding the creation of an action programme for Central and Eastern Europe.⁶ Norwegian aid shipments to Murmansk peaked in the wake of the 1998 “August crisis”, when the rouble lost much of its value. Humanitarian aid—the *gumanitarka* in colloquial Russian—was already a known phenomenon in the area, and not a particularly popular one among large sections of the local population. It was seen, rightly, as a manifestation of the rich neighbour in the West believing Russians were poorer than was actually the case. Murmansk Governor Yuri Yevdokimov spoke in two tongues. While petitioning for humanitarian assistance from Norway—he was on travel in the neighbouring country when the crisis erupted—back home he complained publically about the rags Norway was throwing at the Russians: “There is no tragedy, there is no disaster, in our region. There is no reason to expect 50,000 refugees on Norwegian soil. We can get by without their humanitarian help”.⁷ But what were conditions really like? Most people had lost their savings, and the value of salaries

had shrunk dramatically—dramatic enough, but less of an anomaly in Russia than in its Nordic neighbours. People still had enough money for food, if not quite for the latest mobile phone, to put it like that.

Another manifestation of the Norwegian desire to play the Good Samaritan card was the stubborn urge to “train” the Russians to do things our way. Nobody really questioned whether the Russians wanted or needed to be trained, nor the soundness of the ultimate goal: a society à la our own. The purpose of the Norwegian aid—sorry, partnership—was to enable and encourage “a fundamental restructuring” of Russian politics and society, no less.⁸ For example, we would help the Russians build “transport and telecommunication systems”, “an efficient customs administration”, “an open and independent press structure”, “an agricultural produce trading system”. We would help “train Russian fishermen” and transfer some of our own “environmental expertise to Russia”.⁹ The general feeling in Norway was: “Look at us, we’re training the Russians!” The Cold War was over and won, and it was a pleasure to be able to help a misguided Russia rise from the ashes, indeed to bring it to the threshold of a new era. At the first joint seminar for Norwegian and Russian fisheries inspectors, in 1993, attended by Defence Minister Jørgen Kosmo and Fisheries Minister Jan Henry T. Olsen to underline the importance of the Norwegian initiative (as well as by myself), journalists insisted on having a photograph of a Norwegian inspector controlling mesh sizes with a Russian inspector at his side, looking on. The interpretation: “Just look, [Norwegian] Ola is teaching [Russian] Ivan how to measure a mesh size!” The reports that followed bore headings like “Back to school for Russians” and “Russians visiting Norway to learn”.¹⁰ Ivan, it hardly needs to be said, was perfectly competent at measuring mesh sizes before Ola entered the frame.

The great misery discourse is the negative twin of the Barents euphoria discourse, two sides of the same coin. It’s black and it’s scary, but it’s exciting and it’s full speed ahead. We speak in big words and act with big money. The High North is still where the action is.

*

I don’t like saying “what did I say?”, but I did see it coming. “Oddrun’s fiasco” glared out at me from the newspaper one day towards the end of the 1990s, with reference to the head of the Barents Secretariat (and famous former minister from the Labour Party), Oddrun Pettersen.¹¹ There were limits to how long the media would find it interesting to

write about Ola and Ivan finally working together. It's like the celebrity gossip magazines: If you invite them to the wedding, they'll come for the divorce.

In the Norwegian foreign policy salons, a rumour had been going the rounds for several years: the ministry had lost interest as early as 1994 and the EU referendum. Euro-Arctic splendour had been the government's gift to the North, but as everyone knows, there's no free lunch, etc. Northerners were invited to the Euro party; they accepted the Barents scheme but said no to the rest. *At least we tried*, but that was that. The Barents locomotive could not be stopped—it was impossible in view of both domestic regional and foreign policies—but instead of ministerial enthusiasm, it was more a case of cruising ahead on autopilot from now on.

It didn't take long before stories of scandals hit the news. The large industrial projects were the icing on the cake of the Barents programme in the early years. People spoke warmly about the environment and went in for expansive cultural exchange programmes. However, they could hardly conceal that this was a mere garnish for the main course, the stuff that would create jobs, generate hard cash, and make coastal communities viable. Given the prevailing sense of optimism, there was no reason to doubt that success was imminent. The first major setback occurred a few years after the coming of the Barents Region. A jewel in the crown of the partnership, whose purpose was to convince the world that "it can be done", had until then been the Norwegian–Russian timber plant Rossnor in Arkhangelsk oblast (county).¹² Despite doing a brisk trade, in the spring of 1995, the Norwegian partners were shown the door and their equity lost. And despite winning their case in the Russian courts, the ruling was never enforced. The Norwegian partners were threatened with death and saw no alternative but to flee the country. For people in the know, these actions were nothing new. There had been several incidents in the fishing industry where Western investors had been thrown out as soon as the company had money to spare. But little was said about them. They were seen as anomalies or start-up difficulties in the business partnership. Rossnor, though, was the watershed event.

In the years that followed, similar stories would surface from time to time. One flagship after another sank to the bottom. The Pomor bakery in Nikel—the Russian border town—and Murmansk soon became the most prestigious business project; by 2000, it had closed down too. From the Norwegian standpoint, trickery and deception were obviously

involved. Close to a million kroner were lost when the Russian authorities without a moment's notice, according to the owners, confiscated equipment from the bakery. In 2004, the herring factory Gigante Murmansk followed. It had been marketed as a new and much-needed success. After the Norwegians had invested tens of millions—largely public funds—the Russians appropriated the majority shareholding in an unexpected move the Norwegian partners could do little to prevent. Within the Nuclear Action Plan's project portfolio, the situation was proving even uglier. As the largest foreign investor, Norway had funded the construction of a liquid radioactive waste treatment plant in Murmansk. With every fresh update, we were informed the facility was almost operational. In the end, the project was tucked away in the drawer for unsuccessful projects. I had been involved in evaluating the performance of the Nuclear Action Plan in 2000. In our interviews with Russians, the situation at the treatment plant—which just before had again declared its imminent start-up—was typically described as a “too gilt-edged”. It would have been completed on time “if it had not been for the generous funding from abroad”. Norwegian media entered the fray, and the Foreign Ministry didn't mince its words. “Norwegian nuclear crisis in Murmansk”, wrote the largest Norwegian newspaper, *Aftenposten*, in 2001.¹³ “Nuclear Plan not a great success”, admitted the State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry a few days later.¹⁴

Disappointment over the failed business ventures and nuclear projects spreads gradually to the Barents initiative itself. Although it was still possible to encounter the old joy and optimism from the early days in laudatory speeches, official Norwegian rhetoric tended to note in passing nowadays that the project had not progressed as smoothly as initially anticipated. In a 1999 publication on the Barents Region from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we can read: “Early expectations of good commercial and investment outcomes were in hindsight too optimistic”.¹⁵ Likewise, the Ministry's Russian strategy from 2000 says: “There is little doubt that we in 1993 and subsequent years had unrealistic hopes concerning economic cooperation in the Barents Region”.¹⁶ The media described the situation in less equivocal terms. A typical example is a headline in *Aftenposten* in 2000: “Foreign Ministry spent 1.1 billion in Russia: Frittered away on pointless folly”.¹⁷ Things take longer than we envisaged at first, the State Secretary at the Ministry conceded in the report, but “the Ministry has by no means abandoned its commitment to the Barents Region. What next year's priorities will be, we do not know yet”.¹⁸

The Barents cooperation has done a great deal of good, and it has not been particularly expensive compared to other major initiatives in the High North. Two unconditional winners are the people-to-people cooperation project and the Barents Health Programme. And borders at least in one respect are gone—a generation of young Barents–Northerners has grown up enjoying cross-border education opportunities. The local border traffic permit was introduced, and visa rules were relaxed. There are plenty of examples of small-scale business partnerships. But by the turn of the millennium, the voice of the ministry had lost much of its conviction: “We do not know entirely what next year’s focus will be, but we have not given up”. As we shall see later in the book, it would take years for a new commitment to emerge. (But when it did, it was welcomed with fanfares and fireworks.)

*

Just a few months after my wide-eyed entry into the research arena, I was given a challenge of my own: to give a talk at a high-level Barents gathering at the Hotel Rica Arctic in Kirkenes. I had not been asked simply because of my expertise—which at the time was not widely known, and perhaps not completely honed—but the Northern Norwegian institution I worked for needed to be represented. One day the manager came into my office and said he had asked everyone thinkable among my senior colleagues if they could go, but none could. “So that leaves me with you, Geir”, he said. After receiving a personal invitation in the mail from Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal—something my boss thought was a real treat—ministry officials proceeded to sample possible subjects for my talk. “Possibilities and limitations in Norwegian–Russian relations” would be fine, they agreed in some hurry. Others, I thought, were taking good care of the possibilities, but not wanting to appear unprepared, I did some research on heavy transport, timber exports, and tourism potentials. All the same, the main subject of my talk was the *challenges* facing cooperation, not least from a “cultural” point of view. I didn’t want to sound like a sour puss either, but I knew first hand that Norwegians and Russians in many situations bring very different frames of reference to the table. And I sincerely believed that *knowledge* of these “cultural differences” could only be of the good. The differences were not only the result of 70 years of communism in the Russian Empire; members of the “Barents fraternity” had for centuries lived in different cultural spheres, with the Renaissance and Enlightenment in the West, Mongols and Ivan

the Terrible in the East. Even the Pomor tradesmen thought their trade partners were exotic and alien, pidgin Russo-Norwegian notwithstanding. And Murmansk, the centre of the new Norwegian courtship, was not even thought of before that pre-Revolutionary trade had already ceased to exist. The Arctic's capital was built from scratch, starting at the end of World War I. Inhabitants of the Kola Peninsula are Southerners, for heaven's sake: first- second- or at least third-generation immigrants from *all over the place* in the former Soviet Union. Clearly, language training and infrastructure were not enough. Get hold of an interpreter and build a road, so we can get things moving somehow. Ivan is a likeable guy, and we've toasted our respective health in Russian vodka and Norwegian aquavit. As if Northernness alone gave an intuitive understanding of how the others thought.

Shortly before I mounted the podium, a flustered lady from the Foreign Office made a beeline towards me through the rows of seats in the Kirkenes cinema: "It's important you focus mainly on the opportunities, right? Not barriers and hindrances! Commerce and trade and such-like. You with me?"

*

Ten years later, I stood on the same podium in Kirkenes, this time to launch my first book on Norwegian High North policy, *Barentsbrytninger* ("Barents Refractions").¹⁹ The book was written with a foot lightly touching the accelerator and without adding very much between the lines in my account of the Great Barents Awakening—it was a bit frantic at times (both the Awakening and the book). In particular, I focused on the Norwegian lack of understanding of Russian reality, from political system to public discourse in the new old Russia. In the audience were many enthusiastic Barents Region builders from the old, pioneering days, and I had the same lump in my throat as I had felt early in my career, when one wasn't supposed to talk about how long the road actually might turn out to be. Was the time ripe now? Would the founding fathers of the Region feel set upon? Would they feel insulted (I know that look on their faces) and want to get back at me? "*We're* the people who live up here in the North; *we're* the ones who know how the Russians think, and we simply do not recognize ourselves in your account," a well-rehearsed chorus indeed.

I talked about Norwegian euphoria and Russian sense of grievance, Norwegian terms and the Russian factor. Just as I was thanking

the audience for their attention, one of the Russians in suits in the front row stood up, clapped his hands, and turned to the rest of the audience: “Good story about Russia – exactly how it is!” No further questions from the audience.

NOTES

1. Literally: “mine in yours”, meaning “I speak your language”.
2. Traces of this discourse can be found in both the “official” Swedish (Dellenbrant and Olsson 1994) and Norwegian (Stokke and Tunander 1994) Barents Region-building books.
3. See, e.g., Stokke (1998) for an overview.
4. *Natur & Miljø Bulletin*, No. 13, 1990.
5. Hønneland (2005, p. 137).
6. *St.meld. nr. 74 (1992–1993) Om plan for samarbeid med Sentral- og Øst-Europa samt SUS-landene og i Barentsregionen* [“White Paper No. 74 (1992–1993) On a Plan for Cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe as well as the CIS and in the Barents Region”]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1993.
7. *Polyarnaya pravda*, 23 September 1998. The number 50,000 stems from an old Norwegian accident contingency plan for the nuclear power plant on the Kola Peninsula. It was erroneously presented in the Russian press as if Norway was expecting an influx of 50,000 Russian refugees fleeing the consequences of the economic crisis in Russia.
8. *St.meld. nr. 47 (1994–1995) Om handlingsprogrammet for Øst-Europa* [“White Paper No. 47 (1994–1995) On the Action Programme for Eastern Europe”]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1995, Section 5.1.
9. *St.meld. nr. 74 (1992–1993) Om plan for samarbeid med Sentral- og Øst-Europa samt SUS-landene og i Barentsregionen* [“White Paper No. 74 (1992–1993) On a Plan for Cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe as well as the CIS and in the Barents Region”]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1993. The quotes are from pp. 24, 25, 32, 34, and 40.
10. Because I didn’t save the various newspapers, the headings are from memory.
11. *VG*, 29 March 1997.
12. See Hønneland (2005, pp. 125–127).
13. *Aftenposten*, 10 January 2001.
14. *Aftenposten*, 24 January 2001.
15. *Barentsregionen: Samarbeid og visjoner* [“The Barents Region: Cooperation and Visions”]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999.
16. *Norge og Russland: Mål og virkemidler i den videre utvikling av vår russlandspolitikk* [“Norway and Russia: Goals and Instruments in the Further Development of our Russia Policy”]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000.

17. *Aftenposten*, 25 February 2000.
18. Ibid.
19. See Hønneland (2005).

REFERENCES

- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Dellenbrant, Jan Åke and Mats-Olov Olsson (eds). 1994. *The Barents Region: Security and Economic Development in the European North*. Umeå: CERUM.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2005. *Barentsbrytninger: norsk nordområdepolitikk etter den kalde krigen* ["Barents Refractions: Norwegian High North Politics after the End of the Cold War"]. Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget.
- Neumann, Iver B. 1994. "A Region-Building Approach to Northern Europe". *Review of International Studies* 20: 53–74.
- Stokke, Olav Schram. 1998. "Nuclear Dumping in Arctic Seas: Russian Implementation of the London Convention". In *The Implementation and Effectiveness of International Environmental Commitments. Theory and Practice*, edited by David G. Victor, Kal Raustiala and Eugene B. Skolnikoff. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Stokke, Olav Schram and Ola Tunander (eds). 1994. *The Barents Region: Cooperation in Arctic Europe*. London: Sage.

The Russian Factor

Abstract Russia's relations with the West have been at the heart of Russian political philosophy and Russia's foreign policy outlook for centuries. By the nineteenth century, two well-defined but separate camps had crystallized: Westernizers versus Slavophiles. We can trace the alternating dominance of the one camp over the other also in post-Soviet foreign policy, and relations with Norway have followed these wider fluctuations: openness to Western influence in the early post-Cold War years, and a resurgence of scepticism and suspicion in the late 1990s. This chapter engages with the Russian idea that the West is trying to encircle Russia in the Arctic and shows how Western ambitions in the European Arctic met the harsh Russian reality around the turn of the millennium.

Keywords Russian foreign policy · Russia and the west · Barents region

In the Autumn of 1995, just as my stint as a contract researcher in the North was coming to an end, I sat in a kitchen in a Murmansk flat watching my elderly Russian research partner Nikolai as he snarled and spat at the TV: “Traitor...” It was a news story about the war in Bosnia; in Nikolai’s opinion, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev—the Russian “progenitor” of the Barents Region—was betraying his Serb brethren.¹ “But what else would you expect from a Jew?” he said. “Is Kozyrev Jewish?” I asked, “I didn’t know that. His name doesn’t sound particularly Jewish”. “That’s the sort of thing we Russians just know”,

parried Nikolai. “A real Russian would never have caved into the West like that. Or been so thin”. The combination of pro-Western ideology and lean physique was suspicious, suggesting a hint of Judaism. Or at least something un-Russian, which is anything but good.

I had just read Norwegian philosopher Peter Norman Waage’s classic *Russland er et annet sted* (“Russia is Somewhere Else”), and I was rather susceptible to that sort of thing at the time.² And still am.

*

Relations with Europe cut through Russian history like a red thread. Should we open up and learn from the West, or shut ourselves in and cultivate our own peculiar traits?³ An early example of openness is the story of how Kievan *Rus*—the largest of the Slavic-speaking “city-states”—is said to have acquired its first emperor back in the ninth century. They despatched an envoy to plead with the Vikings in the North-West: “Our country is big and powerful and very fertile, but we have no order – can you govern us?” An example of openness eastwards is the story of Russia’s Christianization in 988. This time envoys were sent west, south, and east, i.e., to the Western Church in Rome, Eastern Church in Byzantium (today’s Istanbul),⁴ and the Tatar Muslims. The Eastern Church was selected because its cultivation of beauty and spirituality suited Russian mentality, they believed. When in 1453 Byzantium was captured by the Muslim Turks, the seat of the Eastern Churches moved to Moscow. From the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome (after Rome and Byzantium), the belief emerged of Russia’s special mission in the world as a protector of the true faith, spirituality, and goodness. Byzantium’s fall happened at a time when the eastern parts of the Slavic-speaking areas had been ruled by Genghis Khan’s successors for more than two centuries. Kiev had been razed to the ground during the Mongol incursions of 1224, and Moscow became the region’s capital, supposedly because Moscovites had been more willing to cooperate with the invaders than the other Slavic-speaking city-states. Russian autocracy and brutal exercise of power by rulers such as Ivan the Terrible in the sixteenth century can be traced, according to some scholars, back to the Mongol system of governance.⁵ Today’s Russians are still conscious of this Mongolian heritage. “Behind every Russian lurks a Mongol”, people say, pulling their eyelids into a slant.

Perhaps the strongest expression of pro-Western sentiment in Russian sovereigns is found in Peter the Great, who reigned from 1682 to 1725. After travelling as a young man around Western Europe incognito, he

came to the stark realization that Russia was a backward peasant society; there was only one way to rectify the situation: Russia had to learn from Europe. Peter proceeded to build a new Russian capital—St Petersburg—in the marshes near the Gulf of Finland. Leading European architects were invited to plan a city that would be Russia’s “window to the West”. St Petersburg retains to this day a special status as Russia’s “Western metropolis”, not only architecturally, but also as a symbol of the Western strand in the country’s history.

In the 1800s, considered the golden age of Russian literature with poets such as Pushkin, novelists like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, and the playwrights Gogol and Chekhov, the dividing line between pro-Westernizers and so-called Slavophiles was drawn by the country’s intellectuals. Westernizers, as the term suggests, wanted Russia to learn from Europe. Slavophiles, on the other hand, upheld a belief in Moscow as the Third Rome. Where Westernizers saw prosperity and progress, Slavophiles saw “a stinking corpse” of soullessness, materialism, and atheism.⁶ The 1917 October Revolution put Russia on an ideological Westernizing course with attendant religious scepticism. The split between Westernizers and, if not exactly those of a Slavophilic persuasion, at least those in favour of isolation or a more eastward outlook, remained a force in the Soviet era. After the years of political and cultural experimentation in the 1920s, came two and a half decades of Stalinist brutality and isolation from Europe. Khrushchev’s attempt to “thaw” relations with the West in the late 1950s and early 1960s opened the West-facing window slightly. That was before he and his experiments were consigned to history by Leonid Brezhnev (and his short-lived successors Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko), who introduced further two decades of “stagnation”.⁷

In 1985, a young and dynamic Mikhail Gorbachev was elected General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party—the rest is history. Gorbie was a man the West “could do business with”, to quote British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s famous remark after her first meeting with Gorbachev.⁸ He formulated and espoused the idea of “a common European home/house”—the Russian word *dom* means both—while urging reconciliation between East and West. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990 for his role in ending the Cold War, but he was never popular among his peers. Even in the heady atmosphere of *perestroika* (reconstruction) and *glasnost* (openness, transparency, and accountability) of the late 1980s, he was disliked. What Russian in his right mind would ration vodka, as Gorbachev had done?

The Russian Federation's first President, Boris Yeltsin, took Westernization to new heights, but was more popular: he was, after all, stout and Russian, like a Russian *muzhik* ("yokel") is supposed to be—at least until alcoholism and volatility took over in the late 1990s. One of the most despised political figures in the early Yeltsin years was his first foreign minister, the Western-oriented diplomat Andrei Kozyrev—the one with Bosnia, the one with the Barents Region.

*

In January 1996, Yevgeny Primakov replaced Andrei Kozyrev as Russia's foreign minister. Primakov, like his predecessor, was a professional diplomat, but while Kozyrev looked to the West and North, Primakov's expertise and experience lay in regions to the East and South, i.e., Asia. Kozyrev, in addition to his Westward inclinations, was particularly interested in Russia's North-Western corner. As we saw, he was Thorvald Stoltenberg's partner-in-chief in the 1993 creation of the Euro-Arctic Barents Region and allowed himself to be elected to the State Duma from Murmansk oblast. Primakov's expertise was unquestionable, but as said, it lay elsewhere. Primakov was a pronounced Eurasianist. That is not to say he was anti-Western. But Eurasianists see it as their main purpose to engineer balance in the international community, primarily between East and West. Russia's support of the West in the former Yugoslavia became less adamant and the general Western outlook more reserved.

A cruder form of Russian nationalism was emerging, however, in the shape of Russia's Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) and its leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. He expressed the frustration of many Russians over the dissolution of the Soviet Union, loss of territory and economic problems. He played the nationalist card unashamedly and became notorious in the West for saying the day would come when Russian soldiers would wash their boots in the Indian Ocean. He was a self-professed anti-Zionist, even though his father Volf Isaakovich, as he subsequently admitted, was of Jewish extraction and had changed their surname from Eidelshstein to Zhirinovskiy. Before this revelation, he tended to deflect questions about his national descent with the remark: "My mother was Russian, and my father was a lawyer".

In the elections to the State Duma in 1993, the LDPR was returned as the largest party with 23% of the vote. In comparison, the president's party, The Choice of Russia, achieved only 15% and the Communists 12%. The Communists were not what they once had been, either in

terms of domestic or foreign policy or, indeed, ideologically. Lenin's internationalism had been eclipsed by crude Russian nationalism. In terms of practical politics, the party had proclaimed itself the defender of ordinary Russians' livelihoods, but above all fought against everything smacking of Western influence and for the re-introduction of a Soviet-style form of governance. Both the LDPR and the Communists, however, captured the mood of the moment around the mid-1990s or so. Unconcealed fraternizing with the West had ended, and many asked whether the West's stated desire to help Russia had ever been sincere. Wasn't their sympathy just a façade to hide their real intentions, i.e., to continue the Cold War by more subtle means? Had the Cold War been replaced by a "Cold Peace"?⁹ According to some commentators, the West had pressured Russia into adopting systems of governance like the market economy and democracy well knowing they wouldn't work in the country. Why? To further undermine the old adversary.

*

The Joint Fisheries Commission is the most well-established of the joint Norwegian–Russian cooperation arrangements in the North; it has been overseeing the management of the most important fish stocks in the Barents Sea, including the world's largest cod stock, for more than 40 years (as per 2017). The 1990s had been full steam ahead for the Commission, with the highest cod quotas and excellent relations between the Norwegians and Russians. The Commission had extended its authority from quota-setting to control and coordination of technical regulations. It was the Norwegians who led the way, although the Russians routinely accepted Norwegian proposals for new sustainability measures. By the end of the decade, the first signs of Russian reluctance to go along with the changes became evident. It was alleged in both the Fisheries Commission and the Russian public sphere that Norwegians had deceived Russians by proposing measures that ultimately were not in Russia's best interest, safe in the knowledge that Russians trusted them. The joint introduction of the mandatory fish sorting grid was an example. It's a device that separates the small fish from the bigger ones. Sustainable, yes, but difficult to operate. Suddenly, the Russians realized it was mainly themselves that had to bear the burden of this new sustainability drive. While Russia's entire quota was fished by trawlers, Norway gave most of its quotas to coastal vessels using conventional gear. A Russian fisheries veteran said in that connection: "Our management system has collapsed. But whatever the current arrangement, does

it entitle the one party to exploit the other party's errors, and take more than what rightfully belongs to it?"¹⁰ It all came to a head in 1999 when marine scientists on the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES—on which sat both Norwegian and Russian scientists) adjusted their population estimates and proposed drastic cuts in cod quotas. For the first time, negotiations in the Commission broke down. The Russians believed the quota recommendations were "political"; Norway had ganged up with its Western allies on the Council behind an artificially low quota. Why? To make life difficult for Russia. Because it's always in a state's interest to harm another state, even if it causes harm to yourself. Norway was a rich nation and could compensate for lower fish quotas by expanding its fish farming operations. Russia was in the throes of an economic crisis and totally dependent on fishing to maintain social stability in the North-West.

The situation worsened when the Norwegian Coast Guard in 2001 for the first time ever arrested and fined a Russian fishing vessel in the disputed Fisheries Protection Zone around Svalbard, where the Russians believed the two countries had a *gentlemen's agreement* which allowed Norway to inspect Russian vessels as long as any of the latter caught violating the rules were handed over to Russia for prosecution. The incident provoked strong reactions from the highest level in the Russian fishery sector. Notoriously, the chairman of the State Committee for Fisheries (now Federal Fisheries Agency) said the Russian naval vessels should sink the Norwegian coastguard vessel in the Svalbard zone, and not bother to rescue the crew. Fishing circles in Murmansk saw it as another Norwegian attempt to eject Russian fishermen from the waters around Svalbard.¹¹

As if that wasn't enough: the very same year, Norway passed a new law regulating the use of the natural environment on Svalbard, authorizing in the process the creation of a plant protection area just where the Russians were planning to open a new mine. This is politics, not environmental protection, said the Russians; it's just another example of Norway's long-standing ambition to get rid of Russians on Svalbard and the Barents Sea once and for all. An admiral in the Russian Northern Fleet offered the following diagnosis: "Norway and its NATO allies are attempting, whatever the cost, to secure rights to the disputed areas, and limit Russian presence in the Barents Sea as far as possible and altogether in the Arctic".¹² Even the usually amicable governor of Murmansk Yuri Yevdokimov, who a few years later was appointed Commander of the

Norwegian Order of St Olav for his contribution to bilateral relations in the Barents Region, only to be fired for *fooling around* in Scandinavia, said the Norwegians had done everything they could to get the Russians to leave Svalbard of their own free will. “It’s always been the same story. Whenever a country is temporarily weakened, its neighbours try to take advantage of it. [...] Why do we forget that our neighbours on the planet are simply not excited about the prospect of a Russian rebirth?”¹³

I heard much the same response in the hundreds of interviews I did in Russia at the time. One especially clear example is what the director of the federal Russian fisheries research institute told in passing on the genesis of the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement (on straddling and highly migratory fish stocks). The accord introduced the precautionary principle into international fisheries management, but the people behind it obviously had hostile intentions. It was “drafted by Greenpeace, on behalf of the CIA—with the intention of destroying the Russian fishing industry”.¹⁴ Similar sentiments were typically expressed after the interviews, especially if we met the interviewee in a less formal setting. There was the well-known business leader on the nuclear safety side who, at an international jubilation seminar, switched from praising to condemning Norway as soon as he was out in the corridor: “You and I, we don’t need to pretend – we both know why Norway [and the US] did this: to harm Russia”.¹⁵ People imagined, for example, that Norway—usually at the behest of the USA or NATO—wanted to hit energy supplies on the Kola Peninsula by supporting the introduction of safety measures at the nuclear power plant in Polyarnye Zori. The idea was that Norway had demanded as a criterion for its support that the lifespan of the reactors would not be extended (which it was in the end). Similarly, in the fisheries sector, “Norway is doing everything possible to destroy Russian fisheries. And that’s fine. That’s how it should be”.¹⁶ To a fisheries scientist in Murmansk it was almost like a law of nature. “Of course it’s in Norway’s interests to undermine Russia – this is basic economic theory”.¹⁷ Norway is painted in interviews alternately as a dupe or a sly and calculating player—albeit in an easy-going, “natural” way. Naivety is attributed above all to a lack of understanding of Russian corruption mechanisms. The calculation element is posited on a sliding scale from defence of own interests to a desire to hit other states economically and politically, two sides of the same coin, incidentally, according to my Russian interlocutors.

*

In the Autumn of 2001, I visited Yakutsk in the far eastern Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russia's leading producer of diamonds. The town is a seven-hour flight from Moscow, and the Republic is about the size of Western Europe. Living standards are high and the city sparkling clean—supposedly “thanks to the diamonds”. I was travelling with colleagues from the Fridtjof Nansen Institute and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) who were running a three-year research project on developments in the Russian North together. The project was funded by the Norwegian Research Council from a pot meant to encourage cooperation between political science institutes. We were completely free to think up our own research topics. We had been on a tour of North-Western Russia the year before, and thought it would be a good idea to organize another round of interviews further east. That we selected Yakutsk was entirely by chance. One of the NUPI scientists had studied with someone from Sakha and was able to arrange an itinerary for us through his old university friend. Included in our schedule was a visit to the Yakutsk branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. After a round-table discussion on developments in the Russian North, the venerable Russian researchers paired off with Norwegian students depending on their respective fields of interest. I myself was taken under the wing of a history professor—an amiable elderly woman. After we had discussed our project and she had offered different literature tips, she leaned towards me and whispered, “Why has Norway really sent you here? It's because of the diamonds, isn't it?”

*

The extent to which modern Russian foreign policy echoes the main lines of an older Russian ideological mindset is striking: the distinction between Westerners on the one hand and “introverts” (Slavophiles or Eurasianists) on the other. Should Russia learn from the West or keep at a distance? Is Europe a lighthouse illuminating the way to the future, or a “stinking corpse”? Is Russia West, East, or something in between? The turning points in post-Soviet Russian foreign policy speak of a re-orientation in relations with the West and restoration of some kind of balance. After Gorbachev's cautious and Yeltsin-Kozyrev alliance's extensive Westward turn, Primakov-Yeltsin adopted a Eurasianist position towards the end of the 1990s.¹⁸ Extreme Russian nationalists constituted at the same time a noticeable opposition and enjoyed a certain amount of influence on Russian foreign policy. The pragmatic middle ground was cemented under Putin, allowing the nationalists an element of

anti-Western rhetoric in an otherwise pragmatic foreign policy that proceeded according to the customs of good international etiquette—until Crimea, that is.

It is also striking to see how Norwegian–Russian relations followed the trends in Russian foreign policy more generally: Westward-looking in the early 1990s, a slight “inwards” turn around the millennium, followed by the adoption of pragmatism in the 2000s. Well into the 1990s, people said thank you and amen to whatever came across the border in the North: help with nuclear problems, humanitarian aid, and new fisheries regulations. In the bigger picture, there was flirting with NATO while the Cold War was declared lost. By the end of the decade, the festivities were over and Russia had started to fend for itself again, just as they had always done before. NATO, when it came down to it, was not that interested in letting Russia in from the cold, but willingly accepted the old Soviet Eastern and Central European satellite states, even former Soviet republics in the Baltics. Russia had been tricked—the Cold War had turned into a Cold Peace.¹⁹ Norwegian nuclear safety support to North-Western Russia was perceived as covert intelligence. Why would little Norway care less about a localized radiation hazard on the Kola Peninsula, if not to gain access to military installations? Why would Norway condition its support to nuclear safety on the non-extension of the lifetimes of the oldest reactors at Kola Nuclear Power Plant, if not to undermine energy supplies in the area? The new collaboration on technical regulations in the fisheries sector—in Norway referred to as so successful the model was an export product in its own right—was a tool the conniving neighbour had used to get the credulous Russians to agree to measures that were not in Russian’s interest. The low quotas recommended around the turn of the millennium Norway had persuaded its Western allies on the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea to adopt because the cuts would do greatest damage in Russia. At the same time, Norway conducted the first arrest of a Russian vessel in the Svalbard zone and introduced a new environmental law on Svalbard, with provisions on plant conservation precisely where Russia had been planning a new mining operation. Coincidence? (Like one might answer a child: Not everything in the world is about you.)

Norway is a country that complies with international agreements, but breaks *gentlemen’s agreements*. Norway is the neighbour who sends hard cash and high-minded words, but is “not excited about the prospect of a Russian rebirth”. Norway is a long-underestimated small state.

Norwegians do as they like, always ready to do service for NATO. They move quietly in the Norwegian–Russian project landscape, attentive, and wise, “objective without sticking their nose in the air”,²⁰ shun empty talk. They have their refined strategies with fishing equipment, plant conservation areas, and spies disguised as scientists, out for hegemony on the seas and diamonds in the Far East. NATO’s toolbox is full of gadgets.

*

A growing Barents generation of elite Russians notwithstanding, the “Barents citizen” has been a long-time coming. I observed region building in the late 1990s from the sidelines; I was often in Murmansk, but on other errands.

“A sight to behold!” said my gesticulating friend Ivan as he showed me the deserted streets of Murmansk in August sometime in the late 1990s. “All the southerners have pushed off South. You know, they’re indolent by nature, they’re taking it easy down in Ukraine”. My researcher friend, Irina, herself an immigrant from the South who occupies a senior position in the regional research community, shuddered as we walked side by side through a market where people from Southern climes sold vegetables and fruit: “We don’t like them, you see. Southerner won’t work. They just want to do business”. She used a colourful expletive for people from the South, which I won’t repeat here.

I wanted to discover more about this. During my sabbatical in New Jersey in 2002/2003, at a safe distance from Barents griefs and joys, I decided to write a book about the identity of Russians in the North-West and call it *Borderland Russians*.²¹ Back home in Norway, I conducted interview trips to the Kola Peninsula loaded with questions for ordinary people about what they think makes them different from Southerners—and from Scandinavians across the border. To make a long story short (read the book!), I concluded that Kola dwellers have one idea of what the good life in the North means and another on what the “good life in the West” means (the latter in quotes!). But people twist and turn these ideas to suit the circumstances—they are performing what I call “narrative juggling”. One and the same person—in this case, my interviewee Marina, a woman in her late thirties—can proudly describe open borders in the North to her friends in the South (“everyone had such longing in their eyes when I told them about my life in the North”), and in conversation with me—in the interviews—refer to Norway as a pretty crappy place (“wouldn’t let my kids grow up there”). She basks in the glory, but throws up in the shadow of Barents cooperation with the Nordic countries.

People generally use very strong expressions when they speak of Northerners and Southerners, Russians as well as Scandinavians, but their descriptions duck and dive between positive and negative. People can proudly call themselves real Murmanskians, for only a minute later to insist that building a city of half a million people above the Arctic Circle was a crime. They can recite the story of the good life in the North, only to grumble over the climate: not only is it cold and dark, but the varying atmospheric pressure, magnetic storms, and lack of oxygen are harmful to the human *organizm*. They can express admiration of Norwegian prosperity and order, but also paint a picture of Norway like the ancient Slavophiles' account of Europe as a stinking corpse: materially wealthy, indeed, but soulless, evil, and decadent. A couple of psychologists I interviewed spoke perceptively about the declining health of the Norwegian population because their blood wasn't mixed enough (too much inbreeding, in other words). But they also said they would like to send their children to Norway. A young man spoke excitedly about the good life on the other side of the border, only in the next breath to say that he once saw a picture of a group of Norwegians where "not a single face expressed the slightest spark of intelligence". Some had "disproportionately large heads, others disproportionately small—it would not be an insult to call them completely deformed" (something for which he otherwise claims there is a scientific explanation: too little variety in the blood). While the good life in the North is something worth striving for, "the good life in the West" is a good life only in scare quotes. It *might* be a good life in material respects. But it is also a soulless, hollow existence, and a sterile Barbie world in *slow motion*.

The main picture emerging from the interviews is less severe, I must add. It posits an idea of life in Norway as orderly—comfortable but boring. As one young man put it: "We [Russians] need scandals!" Another sums it up this way: "[Scandinavians] are ordinary people alright. But they need to get out and about, come over to us, we'll help them let their hair down. There they sit, turning sour. What they need is a bit of zest to their lives. We're always ready to help, right?"

*

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region was invented by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with help from Oslo's political science experts. By the time the partnership was formalized in January 1993,

its history had already been written: cooperation in the Barents region, according to the Ministry, is simply a continuation of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century trade relations between the coastal populations of Norway and North-Western Russia. Known in Norway as the Pomor trade, with the establishment of the Barents Region, “Pomor” became something of a buzzword in Norwegian foreign policy circles, a symbol of the new times, the end of the Cold War, and friendship across the border. In Russian, however, “Pomor” simply means “people who live on the shore”, and has no association with the historic trade with Norway. In practice, it simply refers to the people living on the North-Western shores in Russia before the Soviet “conquest of the North” after World War I. Following the Norwegian “cultivation” of the concept of Pomor, it was picked up by the few Russians whose predecessors had indeed lived in the region for generations.

Since “Pomor” meant so little to Russian decision makers, it gradually lost its currency as a metaphor for cross-border collaboration. It did come to stand for a narrower form of cooperation, however, between the old “Pomor capital” in Norway, Vardø, and groups in Arkhangelsk who wanted to revive the concept. Vardø, practically no more than an old fishing village on the north-eastern tip of Norway, was in dire economic straits in the 1990s, with sky-high unemployment and accelerating depopulation. The town milked the Pomor brand for all it was worth. With financial assistance from the Barents Secretariat, which manages the Norwegian funds for joint projects with North-Western Russia on behalf of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ties were forged with Russian Pomor-friendly groups in cultural, economic, and political spheres. At the 2012 Pomor Festival, Thorvald Stoltenberg, Norwegian “progenitor” of the Barents Region partnership, was appointed “Honorary Pomor”. On visiting Arkhangelsk the year after, he proposed the establishment of a new department at the Northern (Arctic) Federal University, dedicated to the study of Pomor culture. On the same occasion, a Norwegian–Russian Pomor Agreement was signed, and Stoltenberg was created Honorary Doctor at the University. The Director of the new Pomor Institute of the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities in the North, Ivan Moseev, said,

A special thing about the Institute is that for the first time we will study not only indigenous peoples and minorities included in the official list of indigenous peoples and minorities of Russia, but also other indigenous

peoples who do not have the status of a minority [i.e., the “original” ethnically Russian population along the shores of North-Western Russia].²²

In Autumn 2012, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) accused Ivan Moseev of working with Norwegian intelligence to destabilize Arkhangelsk socially and politically, a charge carrying a 20-year sentence.²³ Accusations of high treason were dropped when the case came to court, but he was charged with incitement to ethnic hatred. The reason seemed to be that Moseev was believed by FSB to have posted a piece on a newspaper website where he referred to Russians as “scum”. According to the editor of the website, the comment had been sent from Moseev’s IP address, which Moseev denied. A group of Russian patriots gathered outside the court carrying banners accusing Pomors of being separatists and traitors of Russia’s national interests. One of them asked, “Is Arkhangelsk oblast the big, sovereign Russian North or Norway’s Pomor colony?” Another urged people to “Say NO to Pomor fairy-tales in Norwegian orchestration!”

Two years before, a book called *Pomor Fairy-Tales* had been published in Norwegian and Russian, financed by the Norwegian Barents Secretariat—free copies were distributed to schools in Northern Norway and North-Western Russia. Around the time of Moseev’s trial, the book suddenly attracted the attention of the media. In an article that spends some time ridiculing the book’s attempts to adapt modern Russian to “Pomor style”, its author speaks of the publication as “a Norwegian–American attempt at destroying the Russian ethnos”; the message transmitted to Russian schoolchildren is, “Be a Pomor – that is, DON’T BE RUSSIAN”.²⁴ Another article—entitled “‘Pomor hysteria’: When will Norway ‘negotiate with the Pomors’, and not with the Russians?”²⁵—calls the fairy-tale book “propaganda” whose purpose is to “defend Norwegian interests [...] against the interests of the Russian people and the Russian state”. Moseev is referred to as a “perpetual activist, with no constructive work to his name, no real [standards of] professionalism, a noisy person who loves the [sound of] loud words of the ‘civil society organizations’”. The author quite correctly observes that the word Pomor is used differently in Norwegian and Russian, a result, he explains, either of Norwegians’ ignorance of the word’s real meaning, or as a determined effort by Norway to create chaos in Russia in order get hold of Russia’s natural resources. Norwegian attempts to “create a

positive northern identity” necessarily imply a perception of “traditional Russian identity [as] something ‘negative’”.

Yet another article attacks the premises of the entire enterprise—both the fairy-tale book and Barents regional cooperation as such—which is reflected in the book’s foreword, where the Barents Region is portrayed as the “common home” of Norwegian and Russian Northerners.²⁶ The Barents region, the author argues, is not a historical region; the concept was invented by Norwegians for political ends (and not very benign ends either). Northern Norway and North-Western Russia are united “artificially” in a regional structure to promote collaboration. The claim that Northerners on both sides of the border are fundamentally similar is a lie and an insult to the North-West Russian population: Northern Norway is the “utmost periphery” of Europe, known for its “deepest provincialism”—the old trade across the border in no way involved any “spiritual relationship”. And insofar as Norwegians are described as “the closest Europeans” to the Russian Pomors, the author asks: “Who are we then: Asians or Arctic Papuans? Would have been interesting to know”. The Pomor fairy-tales are “not fairy-tales at all, but plain Russophobia”. The inanities of the book would have been amusing, were it not for “the author’s convulsive attempts” to influence the mindset of the coming generation.

Ivan Moseev was found guilty in early 2013 of violating Article 282, section 1 of the Russian Federation’s Criminal Code, concerning actions aimed at inciting hatred or enmity, as well as abasement of the dignity of a person or group of persons on the basis of, i.e., nationality or origin with the use of mass media.²⁷ He was fined 100,000 roubles (about 2500 Euros), lost his right to join any Russian public organization and to have a bank account. By order of the procurator, he was also dismissed from his post at the university, and put on Russia’s list of “terrorists and extremists”. He appealed the verdict in higher courts, but to no avail. In late 2013, he filed a complaint to the European Court of Human Rights that he was denied the right to a fair trial.²⁸

*

Cooperation through the Barents Region architecture continues to this day, albeit on a smaller scale than in its glory days of the 1990s. Growth in cross-border contact is, by any thinkable measure, impressive. But the story behind the partnership no longer harks back to the Pomors. Norwegian foreign policy in the European North—declared

in the early 1990s as “Barents policy”—was re-branded “High North policy” after the turn of the century, and in recent years is increasingly known as “Arctic policy”. The Pomor adventure is now represented by the occasional joint festivity between a windswept decaying Norwegian fishing village and a small group of local patriots in Arkhangelsk. The old slogan remained in circulation until Ivan Moseev was accused of high treason and later convicted for incitement to ethnic hatred—against the Russians. Herr Stoltenberg the elder—Thorvald is the father of long-serving Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg—occasionally travels around his old Northern Empire, unveiling a statue of himself here, receiving an honorary doctorate there. In 2012, he was appointed Honorary Pomor in Arkhangelsk.

The story of Moseev’s arrest is a “NATO raid tragedy” plot in distilled form. It is the story of a NATO with no inhibitions whatsoever, which peddles fairy tales to indoctrinate innocent children, to undermine the patriotism of the coming Russian generation, to ultimately destroy the Russian ethnos. It is also a satire over Norwegian Barents rhetoric. So you want to “create a positive Northern identity”—so the old Russian identity isn’t good enough? So you think we’re two of a kind—oh, yeah! Well, we did trade with each other a hundred years ago, but there was no “spiritual relationship” involved. You consider yourselves Europeans, where you sit in the “outermost periphery” and “deepest provincialism”? So what are we then—Arctic Papuans? Norway’s Pomor colony?

*

In March 2014, Stoltenberg Jr. was appointed Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Do I hear: “What were we saying?”

NOTES

1. This chapter is an adaptation of parts of Chap. 4 in Hønneland (2014) and Chap. 5 in Hønneland (2016).
2. See Waage (1990).
3. A classic and highly readable introduction on the effect of various historical watershed events on Russian culture and identity is Peter Normann Waage’s (1990) *Russland er et annet sted* (“Russia is Somewhere Else”). A pioneering theoretical discussion of Russian identity, with particular emphasis on Russia’s relations with Europe, can be found in Iver B. Neumann’s (1996) *Russia and the Idea of Europe*.

4. The city was called Byzantium for only a few years in the 330s before becoming Constantinople, but it remained the capital of the Byzantine Empire, also called Byzantium.
5. See, e.g., Waage (1990).
6. As expressed by Neumann (1996, p. 38): “Some saw redemption for Europe if it could only go to school with Russia; others held that Russia should turn its back and hold its nose while the cadaver that was Europe slowly putrefied”.
7. Mikhail Gorbachev later designated these years the “stagnation period”.
8. BBC interview, 17 December 1984; see www.margareththatcher.org.
9. See Cohen (2000).
10. *Murmanski vestnik*, 18 September 1999.
11. See, i.e., *Rybnaya stolitsa*, No. 24, 2001. The Russian reactions to these events are discussed in detail in Hønneland (2003).
12. *Voennaya mysl*, No. 6, pp. 8–10, 2000.
13. “Shpitsbergen – eto geopolitika!” [“Spitsbergen is geopolitics!”], *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 15 October 1997.
14. Interview in Moscow, December 2007.
15. Interview in Murmansk, February 2000.
16. Interview in Murmansk, April 2000.
17. Interview in Murmansk, February 2000.
18. See Tsygankov (2012) for an overview of post-Soviet Russian foreign policy.
19. See Hønneland (2003).
20. “Potomki vikingov na rossiyskom shelfe” [“Descendents of the vikings on the Russian shelf”], *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 15 August 2006.
21. See Hønneland (2010).
22. “Return of the Pomors”, *BarentsObserver*, 27 September 2012. The rest of the paragraph also builds on this article.
23. “No Charge for High Treason”, *BarentsObserver*, 21 November 2012.
24. “Zachem ‘norvezhsko-pomorskoe vozrozhdenie’ russkim detyam?”, *Regnum*, 3 December 2012.
25. “‘Pomorskaya isteria’: kogda v Russkoy Arktike Norvegia budet ‘vesti peregovory s pomorami’, a ne s Rossiei?”, *Regnum*, 3 December 2012. Note that the adjective *russki* is used instead of the more common, in this context, *rossiyski*. The former refers to the Russian nation, the latter to the Russian state, the Russian Federation.
26. “Kak i zachem norvezhtsy napisali dlya russkikh detey ‘pomorskie skazki’?”, *Regnum*, 3 December 2012.
27. “Ivan Moseev Found Guilty”, *BarentsObserver*, 1 March 2013.
28. “Pomor Ivan Moseev Turns to European Court of Human Rights”, *BarentsObserver*, 26 November 2013.

REFERENCES

- Cohen, Stephen F. 2000. *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2003. *Russia and the West: Environmental Co-operation and Conflict*. London: Routledge.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2010. *Borderland Russians: Identity, Narrative and International Relations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2014. *Arctic Politics, the Law of the Sea and Russian Identity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2016. *Russia and the Arctic: Environment, Identity and Foreign Policy*. London: I.B.Tauris.
- Neumann, Iver B. 1996. *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*. London: Routledge.
- Tsygankov, Andrei P. 2012. *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Waage, Peter Normann. 1990. *Russland er et annet sted: En kulturhistorisk bruksanvisning* [Russia is Somewhere Else: A Cultural-Historical Instruction Manual]. Oslo: Aventura.

The Great High North Enchantment

Abstract In the first years of the twenty-first century, Norwegian politics towards Russia were in a limbo, with many initiatives ending in failure. By 2005, the prospects of Norwegian participation in off-shore drilling for oil and gas on the Russian shelf in the Barents Sea had taken over as the hallmark of the new times in the North. Fresh Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre formulated his High North initiative and declared the northern regions the number one priority of Norwegian foreign policy. This chapter focuses on the public debate about the High North in Norway during the first decade of the twenty-first century. It shows how the discourse was distinctly centred on presenting the High North as “the land of the future”.

Keywords Norwegian Arctic Strategy · Norwegian High North strategy
Barents Region

“The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises [NHO] have seen the light. The Northern Lights. The large hall at the Radisson SAS Hotel [in Oslo] was packed with everybody who thinks they’re anybody in Norway’s business establishment. At the centre was a circular platform revolving slowly round and round and round”.¹ This is how journalist Kjetil B. Alstadheim began his report on NHO’s January 2006 annual conference. “The Boys on the Roundabout” was the article’s title, and the conference was there to illuminate the fantastic opportunities waiting

to be seized up there in the dark and cold. While the stage spun on its axis, Kjell from (the consultation company) Econ and Kristin from (the media group) Schibsted presented a scenario, *Ripples in Water*, explaining likely developments from 2015, when the government would open *The Gulf of Barents* to oil and gas exploration. “Of course, it all depends on whether the resources are there or not”, said Kjell. “Which isn’t certain”, said Kristin. “There’s no need to create that kind of uncertainty at an NHO conference”, observed Kjetil from the sidelines. Because by 2025, Norway would have been turned upside down: the North would be the centre and the South the periphery, with direct air links from Finnmark to Houston and Bangkok. People would flock northwards and realize that the Oslo Fjord and Nordmarka (recreational forests around Oslo) weren’t much to brag about after all. During the seven-hour conference, WWF’s Rasmus Hansson—now MP from the Green Party—was given five minutes to air his thoughts. After he had spoken, moderator Arne Hjeltnes (known in Norway as a presenter on the TV travel show *Gutta på tur*, “Boys – Will Travel”, rhyming with *Gutta på snurr*, “Boys on the Roundabout”, the title of the article), said: “Well, we all seem to be very much in agreement – that is, apart from you, Rasmus”. Arne continued to revolve slowly round and round in the company of Statoil CEO Helge Lund and Hydro CEO Eivind Reiten. “Arne used their first names, ‘Helge’ and ‘Eivind’, and the questions were about as penetrating as an interview on a TV shopping channel”. Finally, Prime Minister Jens mounted the carousel. “Hallelujah!”, exclaimed Arne.

The Barents conferences of the early 1990s were baby formula compared to the whirling High North platforms one and a half decades later. Where the Barents project evoked exuberance, the High North initiative unleashed transports of joy. Where local enthusiasts and press-ganged Southerners had lined up to applaud the return of the Pomors, when Foreign Minister Jonas was in town, it was as if the Beatles had come. The Barents Region was geographically fixed; the High North was all over the place.

*

From the late 1980s to around 2003, hardly anything resembling a High North policy was mentioned in foreign policy debates in Norway. Indeed, had it happened it would probably have conjured up memories of Cold War confrontations, which wasn’t particularly useful when the government was seeking to work with Russia on a friendly basis. Norwegian policy towards the northern regions tended to be called

Barents Region cooperation or Russia policy—at a pinch neighbourhood policy.

A committee of experts was appointed by Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik's centre-right coalition government in March 2003,² headed by then director of the Norwegian Polar Institute, Olav Orheim, after whom the committee is popularly known: the Orheim Committee. Members of the committee included scientists, business and industry people, and government officials. In accordance with its mandate, the committee identified new challenges and opportunities facing Norway in the North, and how best from a holistic point of view to protect and develop Norwegian interests. The committee's report was submitted in the form of an official government inquiry (NOU) in December 2003. The committee defined the northern areas as "the whole of the circum-polar Arctic, including the Barents Region and the Barents Sea area".³ The two latter the committee designated "proximal northern areas".⁴ The report reviewed the political, economic, and social history of the northern regions while noting international forces impacting Norwegian options in the North.

The Orheim Committee proposed measures across a wide range of sectors, from agriculture and reindeer husbandry to tourism and transport. They urged a particular focus on the development of expertise in the High North at the interface between commerce, government, science, and higher education. To this end, they suggested, the government should provide a billion Norwegian kroner over the state budget to be managed by a High North administration located somewhere in Northern Norway. The money would be taken partly from the Russian nuclear safety budget. The committee also urged Norway to initiate talks with Russia on a comprehensive, bilateral agreement covering all activity in the Barents Sea area with a view to promoting economic growth and environmental protection. This agreement would build on the existing bilateral agreements on fisheries management, maritime safety, and the environment. Further, the committee identified thematic and geographical convergence of different international institutions affected by High North policy. The committee majority wanted Norway to concentrate on the Arctic Council and bilateral cooperation with Russia, at the expense of the BEAR—it recommended downsizing the national element of BEAR, leaving behind only the regional tier.⁵ As its final major proposal, the committee suggested the creation of a senior ministerial post

with responsibility for the High North at the prime minister's office or Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The government published a white paper on challenges and opportunities in the North a year after Orheim Committee's report.⁶ The white paper devoted much more space to nuclear safety than the inquiry had done, whose proposals were not followed up to any extent, and there was no suggestion of downgrading cooperation in the Barents Region. The government placed more emphasis on challenges affecting foreign relations and international law in the North, less on human resources and economic growth. In other words, the white paper reflected current expertise at the Foreign Ministry, where it had been written. Policy on the High North, according to the white paper, should build on dialogues with other Western countries and expansion of bilateral ties with Russia.

The white paper did not betoken a revolution in Norway's High North policy, and the government was not given much time to put the measures into effect. After the general election that autumn, Jens Stoltenberg's red-green coalition government came into power, and Jonas Gahr Støre was appointed foreign minister. The High North had emerged during the election campaign as *the* major foreign policy issue,⁷ and the coalition's political platform (known as the Soria Moria Declaration)⁸ drafted jointly by the Labour Party, Socialist Left Party, and Centre Party declared the High North as Norway's most important strategic foreign policy priority. Shortly after the change of government, Støre gave a speech at the University of Tromsø where he started putting flesh on some of the High North policy's bones. The government, he said, would among other things be launching a long-term, cross-sectoral R&D investment programme for the northern regions; it would be called Barents 2020.⁹

An expert committee on the High North chaired by the rector of the University of Tromsø, Jarle Aarbakke, was created to come up with ideas for a comprehensive High North policy. Specifically, they were asked to identify actions that could give the Barents 2020 programme some substance. In the Summer of 2006, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave Arve Johnsen, former Statoil CEO, a similar assignment. He submitted his report in September the same year.¹⁰ In it, he referred to nuclear safety and collaboration in the Barents Region—the main components of foreign policy in the North in the 1990s—and singled out strengthened cooperation with Russia, and High North talks with other Western countries, as the two main pillars of this policy, in harmony with the Bondevik

government's white paper. The government should pursue a holistic approach to the northern regions, with petroleum technology, management of living marine resources, environmental protection, and wider societal impact of marine-related activities constituting a wider whole. Government policies on the development of human resources in the North, Johnsen suggested, should build on the following three pillars: (i) development of petroleum technology; (ii) an integrated management plan for the marine environment in the Barents Sea and Lofoten area¹¹; and (iii) other environmental projects and societal impacts. Johnsen's report addressed the first of these points while the expert committee for the northern areas was meant to deal with final point. (The second point—the integrated management plan for the Barents Sea—was the subject of a separate political process under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment.) In the report, Johnsen focused especially on Norway's comparative advantages in terms of technology and expertise on running oil and gas operations in the North including know-how about building the infrastructure required by such activities along with knowledge of the environment and natural resources in Arctic waters.

Also in his report, Johnsen suggested establishing a joint Norwegian–Russian industrial and economic zone in the area between Kirkenes on the Norwegian and Pechenga on the Russian side, a so-called Pomor zone.¹² The vision here was to develop the necessary land-based infrastructure and logistic chains to develop oil and gas fields in the Barents Sea. A refinery for the oil and gas transported to land would also be built in the zone. Norway and Russia, it was hoped, would agree a set of rules governing business and commerce, including special provisions such as customs exemptions. As this would require the physical delimitation of the zone, the most realistic plan, it was thought, would be to first establish two enclaves within the zone, a Norwegian one at Jarfjorden, east of Kirkenes, and a Russian enclave in Pechenga.

The Pomor zone was just one of the steps proposed by the Stoltenberg government as part of its High North Strategy, presented in December 2006.¹³ In it, the government espoused a twofold understanding of the High North concept. Geographically, it covered the land and sea, including islands and archipelagos, from the Norwegian region of Sør-Helgeland (in mid-Norway) in the south to the Greenland Sea in the west and eastwards to the Pechora Sea.¹⁴ In political terms, the High North also comprised the different administrative units in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia that were defined as part of the

Barents cooperation project. Moreover, it was said, High North policy would also involve the established Nordic cooperation (i.e. through the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers), relations with the USA and Canada in the Arctic Council and with the EU through the Northern Dimension—an EU framework for political dialogue and cooperation between East and West in northern Europe.¹⁵ The strategy was to ensure that Norwegian action in all fields affecting developments in the North pulled in the same direction. Targets were defined as follows:

The overall objective of the Government's policy is to create sustainable growth and development in the High North. This requires a framework that will enable people in the region to build up viable local communities, where there are promising employment opportunities in the long term, good health care services and educational opportunities, and opportunities to enjoy varied natural surroundings and cultural events.

The High North policy also focuses on utilising opportunities for more extensive international cooperation on the use of natural resources, environmental management and research through closer contact with our neighbour Russia and our European and North American partners.¹⁶

The way these objectives were expressed clearly shows how domestic and foreign policy ambitions overlapped, underpinning in that sense the government's desire to pursue a comprehensive High North policy. Indeed, the strategy had a comprehensive look given its broad-brush approach with chapters on human resource development, indigenous issues, people-to-people cooperation, environment, marine resources, oil and gas, maritime transport and economic development. Just to highlight one of the many issues, it would have to be the strong focus on knowledge and expertise. As the strategy says, "Knowledge is the hub of the High North strategy, and is closely linked to environmental management, utilization of resources and value creation".¹⁷ The prospect of exploring for oil and gas in the Barents Sea was not one of the strategy's main subjects, but it was one of the many that were mentioned—relatively briefly and some way down the list. Of concrete steps, prominence was given to the proposal to establish an economic and industrial cooperation zone in the border areas and a new scholarship programme for Russian students in Northern Norway.

The white paper entitled *New Building Blocks in the North: the next Step in the Government's High North Strategy* came in 2009.¹⁸ It seemed almost a purely domestic action plan. The publishers of the Norwegian version were “the ministries” (not the Foreign Ministry, as was the case with the first High North strategy), and the prime minister had written the foreword.¹⁹ The main focus was again on know-how and expertise. The government wanted to establish a centre for climate and environmental research in Tromsø while expanding research infrastructure in Northern Norway. The government also sought to strengthen monitoring, emergency response, and maritime safety systems in the northern seas and encourage sustainable exploitation of petroleum and renewable marine resources. The strategy contained moreover separate chapters on land-based economic development in Northern Norway, infrastructure in the region and indigenous peoples’ culture and livelihoods. Only one chapter addressed foreign policy issues more directly, dealing primarily with border surveillance at sea and on land, although it also contained a section on “joint confidence-building steps” and “cultural cooperation” with Russia.

*

High North policy had until recently been the province of retired generals and other Cold War romantics—and a few businesspeople out to hunt. In Norwegian foreign policy of the 1980s and 1990s, peace-making in southern parts of the world was infinitely more forward-looking than maritime surveillance and shop keeping in the North. The 1998 white paper on relations with neighbouring countries by the first Bondevik government was greeted with a yawn, likewise the 2003 High North committee appointed by the second Bondevik government. But in the 2005 national election campaign, parties from across the political spectrum competed with each other to be the most northern-friendly party. What had happened in the meantime?

From 2004 to 2005, the number of stories in the Norwegian media on subjects to do with the High North quintupled.²⁰ Part of the explanation is probably that the phrase “high north” was mentioned more often in the public debate than in the past as a label of a definite geographic and political area which before had been discussed under different headings. Where politicians used to visit Northern Norway or the Barents Region, Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre travelled to the High North (now frequently spelt with an upper case H and N), whether he

was heading for Kirkenes or Murmansk. High North policy was the new term for the old Cold War security policy, Russia policies of the 1990s, and Barents Region cooperation policy—not to mention the inept neighbourhood policy, the Bondevik government had tried to resuscitate at the end of the 1990s, a campaign that gave the impressions the government intended to turn the Faroe Islands and Greenland into central planks of Norwegian foreign policy. The High North scheme was a timely label signalling hope and vitality, largely personified by Gahr Støre's professionalism and dynamic appearance. It was something different when Jonas entered from stage right, from when the old political and academic warriors warned us not to ignore threats and shelf claims in the North. The High North made it into the domestic political debate too, as a hip variant of the former Northern Norway initiatives with their element of regional policy and peripheral melancholia. The new High North policy was the story of "it's all coming together in the North", the transition from the country's backyard to its promising future.

For it's a new story that's being told as we move into the election year 2005; above all, a story about Northern Norway's place in the world. The government had repeatedly postponed the white paper dealing with the Orheim Committee's report *Mot nord!* (To the North!). Intended to be published in the Spring of 2004, it finally arrived a year later. The government's concrete proposals and new commitments for the High North amounted in essence to hardly more than a drop in the Barents Sea: High North dialogues with our allies and strengthened cooperation with Russia. Something was still about to happen, however. In its day, *Mot nord!* had created hardly a ripple in the public debate other than stoking rivalries between Barents cooperation pragmatists in Kirkenes and the scientific milieu in Tromsø, who apparently preferred counting polar bears with the Arctic Council than helping to create added value with the Russians. But less than a year later, influential figures in the North were able to exploit this burgeoning political interest in the northern regions to create a big story. Not only was it "all coming together in the North"; it was "coming together now!" A couple of examples from the media:

At *Nordlys* [the largest newspaper in Northern Norway], we have been prodding the political parties – across the whole political spectrum – for a long time, begging them to pay attention and start looking towards the North. If they had, they would have caught a glimpse of the bright future

and opportunities beckoning the country. It is along the coast and in the North this future can be forged by means of a pro-active coastal and High North policy. It's in the North the approaching oil and gas adventure will be; it's in the North we have such a huge potential for economic growth and wealth creation.²¹

Our vital national interests lie in the North. This is where the pivot of Norwegian foreign policy must lie. We stand in front of the greatest challenge to Norwegian foreign policy in the post-war period.²²

There had already been a heated debate in Norway about the development of oil and gas fields in the Barents Sea. There had been occasional references to the Russian part of the Barents Sea as well, where there were supposed to be significant oil and gas reserves. Around the mid-2000s, however, expectations of the Russian shelf were increasingly brought into the Norwegian debate: in discussions on petroleum development, yes, but also in the wider High North discourse. A storyline was created which, while it admittedly was visionary, it was also based on facts and relatively sober assessments of various states' interests. "Shtokman will be the world's biggest gas field when it's developed.²³ The Russians will need foreign technology and capital to develop it, and Norwegian companies are well placed [to provide both]. It will have major implications for Northern Norway". If we include superpower interests, the story gets a new tag line. "The US is interested in Russian gas, and Norway needs to get its act together if it wants to avoid being left on the sidelines in an international partnership in the High North".

But a more diffuse, irrational, and frantic storyline was mixed in. "The Russians have already started. We haven't a moment to lose". And in the superpower variant: "The Americans are already on the march, them too". Exactly where these ideas originated is unclear, but it seems quite a few people really did believe the Russians were already extracting oil and gas in the Barents Sea (which they weren't). A couple of examples from reports in the media: "The Russians are already far ahead with their oil operations in the High North".²⁴ "Day by day, the pace of the Russians' petroleum operations North of Norway and Russia is accelerating".²⁵ "Both the US and the EU are negotiating directly with Russia over Norway's head".²⁶ The oil adventure in the Barents Sea is "in a completely different division" than the Norwegian oil adventure so far; we are in the midst of "entirely new geopolitical cross pressures" and about to be "completely outwitted" because "with oil on the menu, old

friendships may soon be of little value”, all squeezed into one small paragraph by the *Nordlys* “think tank”.²⁷

And it went on and on and on:

Norway risks falling between every available stool. Russia and the United States have found each other in the High North, applauded by the EU. Gas, oil, money, and power have turned old enemies into bosom pals, and Norway basically has no role in all this. Will the government’s white paper be sufficiently aggressive to get Norway back onto the playing field? The point – a politically sensitive one – is that the Grey Zone may well contain large amounts of oil and gas. There is a constant pressure on Norway to speed up the negotiations that have been deadlocked for the past 25 years. The official response, according to [then Foreign Minister] Jan Petersen is that there is no urgency. This is what the Foreign Ministry has been saying for years for fear of giving the Russians the impression Norway is in a hurry. Whatever, American and Russian oil companies are leading the development in waters close to Norway in the North, while Norway is sitting on the fence. The Liberals and Christian Democrats are refusing to budge, so the government hasn’t dared press ahead with oil and gas exploration in the Barents Sea. Concern for the environment and fisheries is important to the Socialist Left Party, so there’s not much chance of a Labour-led government pursuing a more aggressive policy in the High North. In the meantime, the Russian giants Gazprom and Rosneft, hand in hand with Exxon and Haliburton, are pushing things forward on the Russian side. It’s full speed ahead with their development of the Shtokmanskoye gas field and Prirazlomnoye oil field.²⁸

Was it perhaps the increase in shipping of Russian oil down the Norwegian coast since 2002 that spawned the idea that the Russians “are already far ahead with their oil operations”? That this oil originated from land-based production further to the east in Russia, and had to be shipped along the Norwegian coast because there was a lack of rail capacity in North-Western Russia, was something nobody talked about. What the story was urging in terms of action is not quite clear. It was often used in more generalized High North argumentation, for example, to affirm “the importance of the High North” while pointing to the necessity, for example, of creating a dedicated ministerial post for the High North. If we add maritime delimitation negotiations and the Barents Sea where “the world’s richest fishing grounds” are to be found, then the story gets legs. It was not particularly politically correct to question or

criticize High North policy around these times: it was considered tantamount to identifying oneself as an “anti-High North” collaborator. Even mentioning the North without shouting an accompany “hurrah!” was no longer the done thing. This aspect of the euphoria evoked by the High North is also the story of Northerners rejecting interference from Oslo by “café latte sipping bureaucrats” in Akersgata (Oslo’s newspaper street, where also the government’s headquarters were located at the time—before the terror attacks on 22 July 2011) and Grünerløkka (Oslo’s hippest neighbourhood, a gentrified working class area), not to mention the improbability of thoughts of any consequence emanating from people living at the tail end of a fjord (an expression used by some Northern Enthusiasts when they talked about the capital of the country, located by the Oslo Fjord).

*

If criticism of the major initiatives of the 1990s was faint hearted at the time, objections to the High North euphoria of the 2000s were well-nigh absent. Amid the full-blown euphoria in the Spring of 2005, I made a pretty naïve attempt to question one of the chorus lines of the debate, the need for a coherent or unified High North policy. Together with my colleague Jørgen Holten Jørgensen, I asked in an opinion piece in *Nordlys* if we really wanted to remove foreign policy activities from the dedicated ministries and county councils and pool all contact with Russia in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—or even in a separate High North ministry, created for the purpose. We allowed ourselves to suggest—knowing full well that we were flying in the face of convention—that the emotions surrounding the idea of the High North were at least to some extent fuelled by our heritage of polar romanticism.

Isn’t it too easy nowadays to say things like “the High North has everything”? Is it true that we don’t have a comprehensive policy on the High North? And if we don’t, do we need really need one? As researchers specializing in northern latitudes we are well acquainted with the region’s rich resources, but it’s not unusual to find several types of natural resources in one and the same place, including places with inhospitable climates and difficult access. What we want to argue is that the recent High North debate in Norway, far more than many are willing to acknowledge, is based in part on an old legacy of Norwegian polar romanticism. When someone says the High North “has everything”, “has a bright future”, and the like, most people nod in agreement without asking for further clarification

of these somewhat skewed conceptions. Now as a phenomenon, it's not particularly Norwegian. In Russian political circles, for example, it is not unusual to talk about the High North in almost metaphysical tones. It's purported to have some sort of divine potential that will necessarily reveal itself as history unfolds.²⁹

Historians Einar-Arne Drivenes and Harald Dag Jølle from the University of Tromsø are troubled by the rhetorical style used by *Nordlys* on the High North in light of Norway's history as a polar imperialist.

Norway may well be considered today by some as an aggressive great power. In many situations, efforts are made to camouflage special interest politics by referring to Norway as a polar nation, to historical achievements, business interests, science and geographical location. It all helps to legitimize our control of such immense areas. But the vocabulary of the editor of *Nordlys* is more reminiscent of what the old Arctic Ocean imperialists used to say: "Norway needs more ships, fresh money and more power in the North" to ensure the respect of other countries of our right to pick and choose (*Nordlys*, 14 May 2005). It's not often one hears someone so explicitly encouraging expansive and strategic thinking to ensure Norway's interests, "Norway was a major power on the high seas and in oil because politicians in the 1960s were far-sighted. It is now the strategic decisions need to be taken that will be assessed sometime around 2050". This is obviously so important that [the editor of *Nordlys*] is willing to sacrifice Norway's reputation as a development aid and peace-loving nation; in his opinion it is "ridiculous to have a development cooperation minister but not a High North minister". Our interests in the North "have to outweigh the need to always be the nicest boy in the peace and development cooperation class (*Nordlys*, 4 June 2005)".³⁰

Nordlys responded in an editorial. With regard to Hønneland and Jørgensen's article, the paper accuses the authors of "sleight of hand" in their analysis, and that it "is about as wide off the mark as it gets". "The United States and Russia", the editor goes on, "have found each other in the North [and] it is probably only a matter of time before [we see] Russian oil rigs approaching the Grey Zone".³¹ Jørgen and I were intentionally misunderstood, and the editorial sowed the seed of the rumour that I had expressed "anti-High North" sentiments, as a worried Northern Norwegian acquaintance later put it.

Drivenes and Jølle were told by *Nordlys*, “it’s now time for action, not research [sic!]. Oil and gas are the locomotives of the economic race to the North”.³² Again, reference is made to the alliance between the USA and Russia. “It is anything but imperialism or polar romanticism that informs our opinion in this case. Far from it, it is about power, oil, and dollars in the sea off our coast, and if we do not stand up for ourselves others will take control”. Another well-known High North advocate in Tromsø—let his name not be mentioned—described Drivenes and Jølle’s article as “just typical of people who naively are trying to cripple the smooth development of the High North [sic! sic!]”.³³ If you didn’t want to join the hallelujah chorus, you should just shut up. You’re either with us or against us.

*

The framework of the debate changed somewhat in the Autumn of 2006. Under the heading “Støre does a belly flop”, The Oslo financial daily *Dagens Næringsliv* wrote:

One year ago, Jonas Gahr Støre elated people in the North with his “Tromsø speech”. Today, the great visions have been replaced with a sensible High North plan few in the North will find reason to celebrate. [...] The contrast to Støre’s “Tromsø speech” at the University of Tromsø on November 10 last year is all the more striking. Støre talked about the wealth of opportunities and responsible policies for the region. Støre was in his element here; the newly appointed foreign minister spoke passionately about the Barents Region cooperation project and the Russian Federation as a strategic partner in developing energy in the North, with Russia supplying the resources and Norway the know-how. Støre was clear that the High North strategy was one of the government’s most important priorities. “If Norway is a society of opportunity, Northern Norway is a region of opportunity”, Støre said. The speech created an almost euphoric state of mind. Flushed foreign office people were so elated they predicted that masses of babies in the North would be called “Jonas”. Today, a certain fear hangs over the foreign office that the Tromsø speech could seriously backfire. Too many big words were spoken and expectations were driven too high.³⁴

“What do a new generator on [the uninhabited Arctic island] Jan Mayen and housing expenses compensation to Sámi college students have in common?” asked opposition leader (and future prime minister) Erna Solberg when the 2009 national budget was made public. “Is it really

the case that everything that happens North of Trondheim is part of the government's strategic commitment to the North?"³⁵ Labour's own county politicians in the North vented the same criticism. "Unfortunately we see a randomly composed sandwich menu of various good causes for the Sámi, Northerners, Jan Mayen, Russia, peace and the environment and whatnot", wrote two of them in an article, calling the government's High North strategy a bluff.³⁶ The mayor of the small municipality Lenvik expressed Northern Norwegian expectations of the national government at the local level. "Visionary ideas and conceptual clarifications, which you're preoccupied with, mean nothing to most people in Northern Norway. Here you will be judged by [...] whether you can get the High North down to earth again and build roads and ports".³⁷ "The High North commitment", government spokesman Karl-Eirik Schjøtt-Pedersen replied, "is not a traditional plan for Northern Norway. [The purpose of the] High North policy is primarily to safeguard Norway's national and international interests and obligations in the North".³⁸ But demands for economic investments in Northern Norway were on the rise, while traditional regional policy support was snubbed at and the government's listing of every minor commitment to the North as part of its High North strategy ridiculed. "Tarmac, social security, jetties, and cheap buses – the High North was what we got", *Nordlys* wrote with a touch of irony the day after the publication of the white paper *New Building Blocks in the North*.³⁹

It's hard not to notice the similarities between the wild expectations of the 1990s to the Barents Region cooperation project and the euphoria of the mid-2000s surrounding the High North initiative. The former was a mixture of Northern Norway involvement and a conscious effort at region building by the power-holders in Oslo. High North ecstasy is not exactly region building in the same way; it lacks the transnational character characterizing the building of the Barents Region building. A key objective of the Barents Region project was to inculcate a sense among the citizens of the implicated member states of belonging to a particular transnational region. High North policy was more of a domestic undertaking, evident not least in the difficulty of finding an adequate non-Norwegian term for the phenomenon. (The word "Arctic" is loaded with other associations in Norway—see Chap. 1—and one usually uses the "High North" variant when talking about the northern areas in languages other than Norwegian.) Naturally, there's a desire to generate international publicity for the North, but the project lacks the same

identity-building ambitions of the Barents Region project. One common feature nevertheless is the branding or trade marking exercise. While old policy bottles are tentatively filled with new wine, more than anything else, Northern politics was meant to glow in a new light. When the white paper on High North policy came out in the Spring of 2005, experts and politicians called it a momentous event in the annals of Norwegian foreign policy. Never before had the opportunities and challenges in the North been brought together in a single document, they said. Nobody seemed to remember the Bondevik government's 1998 white paper on neighbourhood policy. That document did have a few references to policies regarding neighbours to the west, but essentially it was a run-down of the ensuring High North policy, in the main: relations with Russia in the Barents Region. The later High North policy also has, at least on paper, an eye to the west, which further emphasizes its similarity with the neighbourhood policy of the 1990s. Although petroleum was included as a new policy field, the 2005 white paper made little of it. To a large extent, it was more or less the same issues in new packaging. Neighbourhood policy was out, High North policy was in.

Another similarity of note linking the enthusiasm for the Barents Region and the euphoria evoked by the High North project is the use of the rhetorical device "time's running out – we'll be left behind". Early in the 1990s, advocates of closer industrial ties with North-Western Russia said everyone else was trying to beat us to it. "The Swedes are investing, the Finns are investing, even the Germans are investing, and the Portuguese. And here we have Ola Dunk [derogatory personification of Norway] sitting on his backside, and can't pull his hands out of his pockets!" In hindsight, you don't have to spend much time in Murmansk before you realize that most of the city's expats are, and have been for a long time, Norwegians. There were a few cries too many of wolf!, wolf!

By the mid-2000s, some argued that Norway was already being pushed to one side by the major powers in the Barents Sea. Exxon and Haliburton were racing ahead at full throttle to develop the Shtokman field, it was reported. In both cases, the arguments came primarily from Northern Norwegian players, often with sighs of resignation over an Oslo milieu that was inattentive and couldn't see the opportunities unfolding in the North. And if someone in the heat of exaltation shouted anything but "hurray", it didn't take long before they were divested of their legitimacy in the debate. If Southerners were trying to pour cold water onto hot Northern blood, they were ignorant. And if the people

were their own Northern relations, they were not far from traitors. I will not suggest that enthusiasm for the Barents Region project or euphoria for the High North project had no basis in reality. The Norwegian–Russian border had indeed become wide open in the early 1990s, and ten years later, the government was about to allow the production of oil and gas in the Barents Sea. And the Germans and Portuguese allegedly *were* investing in Murmansk, while it looked for a time at least as if the USA would be the primary buyer of LNG from the Shtokman field, if the field was developed. Whether the Portuguese beat us to Murmansk or Shtokman gas would have been shipped to the USA is not my main concern. The interesting thing is that the discourses assumed precisely this form and that the two instances followed such similar patterns. Is it a traditional story that’s told again and again—a story of hope, need to get onto the band wagon, and capital city arrogance?

I don’t like saying it, but I did see it coming, “Oddrun’s fiasco” became “Støre’s belly flop”. The fiasco discourse of the late 1990s had shown how brutal reality could be to the economic growth visionaries of the North. Enthusiasm for the Barents Region project had dissipated and been replaced by a more sober people-to-people rhetoric surrounding the cross-border cooperation; it was as if the failed flagship projects had never existed. “Will Gazprom’s ‘No’ to Statoil and Hydro do the same for the High North euphoria as the many stories of economic fraud in North-Western Russia did with Barents region enthusiasm?” I asked in 2008.⁴⁰ “Will ‘competence-building in the North’ be the High North policy’s demoted version of the Barents Region’s people-to-people programme?”

Well, it turned out that it did. But the story does not end here. High North policy really does go round and round.

*

My experience of the Great Barents Awakening notwithstanding, I wasn’t prepared for a new round of euphoria, this time for the High North, I must admit. I had written a couple of textbooks on Norwegian foreign policy in the High North (and a couple of monographs on “the Russian factor”) in the intervening period, so I should have seen it coming. But it was smuggled in through the back door, so to speak, with the Russian tankers shipping oil from Siberia that suddenly appeared along the Norwegian coastline around 2002/2003—and the subsequent transports of delight spread by the Northern Norwegian press and other regional actors with an interest in the exploitation of oil and gas reserves

under the Barents continental shelf. The tankers were used to persuade people that “the Russians are already doing it”—that is, drilling for oil in the Barents Sea, which they weren’t—so if we don’t want to get left behind, we’d better get started on the Norwegian shelf as well. The Russians cannot be trusted as far as the environment is concerned, the argument went, so in addition, we’d better bring in our more sophisticated Norwegian offshore technology as quickly as possible. As the attentive reader might observe, Norwegian drilling on the Norwegian side does not automatically improve Russian drilling on the Russian shelf. But the argument went home—“drilling for the environment”, as my colleague Leif Christian Jensen called it.⁴¹ “Fake news”, as we say today.

Still baffled by the Great Barents Awakening, I didn’t exactly seek out the High North Enchantment conferences, the ones with “the boys on the roundabout”. But in 2010, I was invited to give the keynote speech at the Norwegian Research Council’s annual High North Conference, quite a hallelujah event if truth be told. Again, as in Kirkenes 15 years earlier, a flustered lady from the organizer’s made a beeline towards me through the rows of seats in the conference hall just before I was to enter the stage. The State Secretary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in the front row.

My message to the audience was that Norwegian High North politics isn’t a fixed, coherent entity; it consists of several layers of sediment from different time periods: we have the High North as a stage for great-power politics (mainly a legacy from the Cold War), for institutionalized collaboration with Russia (mainly a legacy from the 1990s), for a broad national project (mainly a legacy from the mid-2000s), and increasingly for circumpolar politics. I also spoke about the different ownerships to Støre’s High North initiative: the “Cold War romantics”, who yearn for a revival of geopolitical interest in the North; the “petro optimists”, their interests go without saying; the “Barents practitioners”, who perceive the project as a continuation of the early days’ small-scale cooperation in the border zone; the “mayors”, who increasingly took to the field to demand new roads, ports, and jetties; and finally you have my favourite, the “Arctic foxes”. “Arctic fox” is the translation of the Swedish word “fjellräven”, which again is a brand of outdoor clothing frequently worn by politically correct outdoorsy people—mostly from southern Norway or abroad—with organic food in their rucksacks, who worry about the “vulnerability of the natural environment in the Arctic”. In practice, the

“Arctic fox” was Tromsø, the intellectual, international capital of the North. The “Barents practitioner” was Kirkenes, the border town which lost some of its allure when the Great Barents Awakening tapered off. The “mayors” were all the small communities scattered around the Big Norwegian North, while the “petro optimists” were all over the place.

The speech was well received, and it was the different categories of High North enthusiasts—probably reflecting the vast majority of people in the audience—that caught everyone’s attention. “Have to admit it, I’m a ‘mayor’ myself!”, chuckled some of my audience. “OMG, I’m an ‘Arctic fox’!”, exclaimed others.

If you Google my name, one of the first pictures that come up is from that conference, taken right after I went off the stage. The first to rush up to me to exclaim his enthusiasm was the State Secretary, and we were snapped by the Research Council’s photographer. High on attention and slightly star struck—admiringly grinning from ear to ear—I look like a genuine Enthusiast building the region. Me riding high in the North.

NOTES

1. “Gutta på snurr” [“Boys on the Roundabout”], *Dagens Næringsliv*, 5 January 2006.
2. “Mot nord!: utfordringer og muligheter i nordområdene” [“To the North!: Opportunities and Challenges in the High North”]. *Norges offentlige utredninger: NOU 2003:32* [“Norwegian Official Reports: NOU 2003:32”]. Oslo: Statens forvaltningstjeneste, Informasjonsforvaltning [“Norwegian Public Management and Information Services”], 2003.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
5. This proposal created something of a media debate. Interestingly enough, it sharpened rivalries in Northern Norway between utilitarians in Finnmark and what some have called the “arctic fox milieu in Tromsø” (i.e. Norwegian Polar Institute circles), who would rather count polar bears with the Arctic Council than boost value creation with the Russians (see last section of this chapter). Chair of the Finnmark county council, Helga Pedersen, said, “This report, I would say, bears the marks of having been written by an expert committee. It’s all well and good counting polar bears and ice floes, and to call for money to invest in skills development. But it has to be based on local roots, on our reality. The committee’s perception of the area is not something we are familiar with here in Finnmark. There is a debate on natural resources, where rights claim a

central place, which the committee has failed to take properly into consideration. [With regard to cooperation in the Barents Region,] the committee has shown in its discussion a lack of respect. Collaboration in the Barents Region has been an outstanding success at the grassroots' level. Now you want to reduce it to a purely regional enterprise. One of the reasons is the bureaucrats have lost their enthusiasm [for the project]. Do we have collaboration on the Barents Region so that bureaucrats can enjoy their work, or because we who live here can get something good out of it? No, I have to say, and I do feel a bit despondent.” *Nordlys*, 9 December 2003.

6. *St.meld. nr. 30 (2004–2005) Muligheter og utfordringer i nord* [“White Paper No. 30 (2004–2005) Opportunities and Challenges in the North”]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005.
7. See Hønneland and Jensen (2008, pp. 94–99).
8. *Politisk plattform for en flertallsregjering utgått av Arbeiderpartiet, Sosialistisk Venstreparti og Senterpartiet 2005–2009 (Soria Moria-erklæringen)* [“Political Platform for a Majority Government from the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party 2005–2009 (Soria Moria Declaration)”]. Oslo: Office of the Prime Minister, 2005.
9. “Et hav av muligheter—en ansvarlig politikk for nordområdene” [“An Ocean of Opportunities—Responsible Politics for the High North”]. Speech by Jonas Gahr Støre, University of Tromsø, 10 November 2005. Available from the Foreign Ministry’s webpage: www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud.
10. “Barents 2020”—*Et virkemiddel for en framtidrettet nordområdepolitikk* [“Barents 2020”—An Instrument for a Forward-looking High North Politics”]. Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006.
11. *St.meld. nr. 8 (2005–2006) Helhetlig forvaltning av det marine miljø i Barentshavet og havområdene utenfor Lofoten (forvaltningsplan)* [“White Paper No. 8 (2005–2006) Integrated Management of the Marine Environment of the Barents Sea and the Ocean Areas Surrounding it (management plan)”]. Oslo: Ministry of the Environment, 2006.
12. The term refers to what is known as the Pomor trade that existed between Northern Norway (from the northern part of Nordland county) and North-Western Russia (mainly around the river Dvina in what today is Arkhangelsk oblast) from about 1725 until the Russian Revolution in 1917. During the establishment of the Barents Region project in the early 1990s, this Pomor trade was consciously used as a historical frame of reference; it was what was now going to be revitalized. See Hønneland (2005, pp. 108, 119–121).
13. *Regjeringens nordområdestrategi* [“The Government’s High North Strategy”]. Oslo: Government of Norway and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006.

14. Both the definition and the figure should be interpreted with some caution. It was hardly meant to suggest, for example, that Jan Mayen and Svalbard were not located in the northern areas. At the same time, it is conceivable that the absence of a northern boundary of the concept—and the fact that Jan Mayen and most of Svalbard fall outside the government's own High North map—sprang from a desire to avoid giving Svalbard too much prominence in High North policy. The status of the waters around the archipelago is disputed, and Norway has in some instances found it wise to practise restraint to avoid bringing the dispute to a head.
15. A discussion of the EU's Northern Dimension, which was established in 1998 at a Finnish initiative and re-launched in 2007 as "the new Northern Dimension", can be found in Aalto et al. (2008).
16. *Regjeringens nordområdestrategi* ["The Government's High North Strategy"]. Oslo: Government of Norway and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006, p. 7.
17. Ibid., p. 8.
18. *Nye byggesteiner i nord: Neste trinn i Regjeringens nordområdestrategi* ["New Building Blocks in the North: the Next Step in the Government's High North Strategy"]. Oslo: Government of Norway, 2009.
19. The English version was issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, though.
20. See Jensen (2016). His analysis is based on a media search in the Norwegian press database Atekst.
21. *Nordlys*, 4 February 2005.
22. Thorbjørn Jagland, chairman of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee to *Nordlys*, 16 June 2005.
23. That is not actually true; however, Shtokman might become one of the world's largest *offshore* gas fields if exploited.
24. *Nordlys*, 14 March 2003.
25. *Nordlys*, 17 June 2005.
26. *Aftenposten*, 10 January 2005.
27. *Nordlys*, 4 February 2005.
28. *Nordlys*, 19 February 2005.
29. *Nordlys*, 23 March 2005.
30. *Nordlys*, 22 June 2005.
31. *Nordlys*, 28 March 2005.
32. *Nordlys*, 23 June 2005.
33. *Nordlys*, 29 June 2005.
34. *Dagens Næringsliv*, 1 December 2006.
35. Available from the Conservative Party's website: www.hoyre.no.
36. *Dagsavisen*, 9 October 2008.

37. *Nordlys*, 23 October 2008; cited in Folkenborg (2009, p. 2). Folkenborg (ibid., p. 11) also refers to a poll by *Nordlys* (16 September 2008) which shows the level of disappointment in the North with the government's High North policy. The farther North the respondent, the more disappointed s/he is. In the county of Finnmark, 56% were dissatisfied, in Tromsø 52%, and in the county of Nordland 48%.
38. *Nordlys*, 23 October 2008; cited in Folkenborg (2009, p. 2).
39. *Nordlys*, 13 March 2009.
40. See Hønneland and Jensen (2008).
41. See Jensen (2012, 2016).

REFERENCES

- Aalto, Pami, Helge Blakkisrud, and Hanna Smith (eds.). 2008. *The New Northern Dimension of the European Neighbourhood*. Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies.
- Folkenborg, Håkon Rune. 2009. *Nordområdebegrepet: innhold, bakgrunn og forventninger* ["The High North Concept: Contents, Background and Expectations"]. Tromsø: Eureka Digital.
- Hønneland, Geir. 2005. *Barentsbrytninger: norsk nordområdepolitikk etter den kalde krigen* ["Barents Refractions: Norwegian High North Politics after the End of the Cold War"]. Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget.
- Hønneland, Geir, and Leif Christian Jensen. 2008. *Den nye nordområdepolitikken* ["The New Politics on the High North"]. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Jensen, Leif Christian. 2012. Norwegian Petroleum Extraction in Arctic Waters to Save the Environment: Introducing 'Discourse Co-optation' as a New Analytical Term. *Critical Discourse Studies* 9: 29–38.
- Jensen, Leif Christian. 2016. *International Relations in the Arctic: Norway and the Struggle for Power in the New North*. London: I.B.Tauris.

The Arctic Wave

Abstract Around 2010, the enthusiasm surrounding Norwegian High North politics had tapered off, just like inertia hit the Barents cooperation a decade earlier. Once again the emperor had new clothes to put on: “the High North” was out, but an “Arctic wave” was on the rise. As states were making claims to areas of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean, global media revelled in the idea of a “scramble for the Arctic”. Norway threw itself forcefully onto the international Arctic scene, branding itself as the Arctic nation per se. Norwegian High North politics moved from the near abroad to the Circumpolar North. The scene has shifted, but the basic rhythm is the same: the Arctic is a stage particularly suitable for political song and dance.

Keywords Norwegian Arctic politics · Norwegian High North politics · International Arctic politics

It’s 2017 and nearly 25 years have passed since the Great Barents Awakening swept through the country. I still travel to Kirkenes occasionally, where the old Barents cinema auditorium at Hotel Rica Arctic has been replaced by considerably larger (Arctic) venues. The anticipated industrial adventure has yet to materialize in the old mining town at the border—either from soaring trade with Russia (as envisioned under the Great Barents Awakening) or port services for Shtokman gas (anticipated

under the Great High North Enchantment)—but hopes are still as high as ever, at least judging from the number and size of the conferences.

The *Kirkenes Conference* has become an annual event with a dash of high politics; Norway's foreign minister is a regular visitor, and the Russians aren't far behind. The cultural festival *Barents Spektakel* (a name alluding to the Russian *spektakl*—spectacle or play—but also to the Norwegian *spetakk*: a noisy, undisciplined event) oozes of cool. (My last appearance there was a stand-up performance where I enlarged upon Russian identity!) I still travel to Tromsø, the regional capital, where the High North concept has been sidelined by anything with “Arctic” in its name. The conference *Arctic Frontiers* has become the ultimate “see and be seen” event in Arctic circles, along with ...er ... the *Arctic Circle* in Reykjavik, Iceland. The University of Tromsø changed its name in 2013 to ... er ... the *Arctic University* of Norway. Similarly, the University of Nordland was renamed *Nord* (“North”) *University*—Kirkenes got its *Barents Institute*, Bodø its *High North Centre*. And in 2013, Tromsø won the big prize: it would be the home of the permanent secretariat of Arctic Council.

And so it goes on. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently changed the name of its support fund for activities in the North from *Barents 2020* to *Arctic 2030*. Where the erstwhile Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg used to travel to the *Barents Region* and Jonas Gahr Støre to the *High North*, the present minister, Børge Brende, sets foot in the *Arctic*—whether we're talking about Bodø, Tromsø, Kirkenes, or Murmansk. Even my own Master's course at the University of Tromsø ... er ... Arctic University—had its name changed in a bid to attract students. The course started out under the name *Barents Cooperation*, evolved into *High North Politics*, and ended as *Arctic Politics*.

Kirkenes, Tromsø, and Bodø—they're all getting a piece of the High North cake. But these lines are written in Reykjavik, and my greatest High North moments recent years are from Shanghai. The boys are still on the roundabout.

*

In 1982, the UN Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS) introduced economic zones and told governments what they needed to do acquire them. Economic zones could only extend to 200 nautical miles from the shore line. In the case of continental shelves, the rules are different. All states have a right to a continental shelf of 200 miles; here, the

rules governing shelves and water columns follow each other. The way the boundaries are determined is also the same: governments must seek reasonable solutions. In certain circumstances, however, states can claim sovereignty over a continental shelf *beyond* the 200 nautical mile mark. The only criterion is that it has to be a natural prolongation of the area within the 200 mile limit—which is what a shelf *is*, i.e. the relatively shallow basin between land and the deep ocean, the abyssal plain. The entire Barents Sea lies on a continental shelf, and depths are never more than a few hundred metres. The seabed to the west, however, can plunge several thousand metres below the surface. UNCLOS allows states to acquire jurisdiction to explore, extract, and manage the natural resources on their continental shelf within 350 nautical miles or 100 nautical miles beyond the 2500 metre isobath (a line connecting points of equal depth). In contrast to the economic zones and the continental shelf within 200 miles, however, permission to do this is not granted automatically. Governments must file a claim with the international Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in New York, along with scientific evidence that the area beyond 200 miles is, in fact, a prolongation of the land. The members of the Continental Shelf Commission are scientists and technology experts. They assess the scientific merits of the documentation provided by governments to substantiate their claims—the Commission in this sense is neither a court of law nor a political body. And states have only the one opportunity to get the international community to agree to an extension: governments have to file the claim within ten years of ratifying the Convention on the Law of the Sea.¹

Ratification of the Convention was slow. The USA and other Western governments held back because they disliked the provision on jurisdiction over the seabed outside the shelf, that is, in deep waters. Developing countries had successfully lobbied to have the resources of the deep ocean classified as the common heritage of mankind. If a company discovers resources in these areas and wants to exploit them, it has to submit plans to a dedicated body, the International Seabed Authority (ISA), based in Kingston, Jamaica. The Authority divides the proceeds from the planned commercial operation equitably, while heeding the interests of the nearest coastal states. These companies are usually based in the industrialized North, while the resources are generally located in waters off the coasts of developing countries in the Southern hemisphere. The USA saw these as “socialist” constraints on the earning capacity of large international corporations and waited until 1994 to sign UNCLOS,

by which time it had acquired an amended seabed provision as an appendix. The upshot was that many governments did not ratify the Convention until the mid-1990s and later. The deadline for submitting claims to the Continental Shelf Commission therefore moved forward; the clock didn't start ticking until 1999.

As the first Arctic state, Russia filed its claim in 2000. It was considered to be deficient in several respects and was quickly rejected. Norway followed suit in 2006, with approval arriving in 2009. In addition to agreeing with Norway that the seabed under the Barents Sea and the Norwegian Sea beyond 200 nautical miles is part of the continental shelf (i.e. is not deep sea), the Commission also agreed that a small sliver beyond the 200-mile limit North of Svalbard, the so-called Nansen Basin, also qualified as continental shelf. Denmark filed its claim for an area off northeast Greenland in 2013 and in the Central Arctic Ocean in 2014. Decisions are still pending. Although Canada was obliged under the rules to file its submission by 2013, the Commission has not enforced the deadlines very strictly. Russia filed a partial revised submission in respect of the Arctic Ocean in 2015. The USA has yet to ratify UNCLOS. All sitting presidents have wanted the USA to go ahead and ratify the Convention, but conservatives in Congress have obstructed moves in that direction. At present, then, the USA is prevented from making use of the Convention's rules on fixing the outer limits of the continental shelf, and how the superpower will react when the continental shelf claims of other Arctic states begin to win approval remains something of a moot point.

However, the Arctic continental shelf is divided; the big winner will be Russia. The question is just how much more the Russians will get than everyone else. Russia has everything to gain from promoting the legitimacy of the Law of the Sea in the Arctic. Finding a compromise with its neighbours on outstanding delimitation issues could further that end.

*

After having their first submission rejected, the Russians intensified their exploration of the Arctic shelf. It was during one such scientific expedition, in August 2007, that the research team lowered a mini-submarine to the seabed at the precise point of the North Pole and planted a metal Russian flag into the ground. It became a worldwide media sensation and caught the attention not least of political circles. Russia, the reports said, had laid claim to the North Pole. It was the start signal for what

has been called the “scramble for the Arctic”. The media were prone to depicting the Arctic as a no man’s land, beyond the reach of international law, a place where governments could do as they liked while the world’s reserves of oil and gas elsewhere were running dry. According to estimates drawn up by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Arctic may contain as much as 25% of the world’s undiscovered oil and gas deposits. It gave added sustenance to the Arctic race story. At the political level, Canada, a country with designs on the Arctic itself, was particularly annoyed. “You can’t go around the world these days dropping flags somewhere. This isn’t the 14th or 15th century”, the Canadian Foreign Minister, Peter MacKay, was reported as saying.²

As we noted in Chap. 1, Borgerson (2008) captured the atmosphere well in his “Arctic Meltdown”: It’s not a matter of if, but when, the Arctic Ocean will be opened to the “exploitation of its lucrative natural-resource deposits” (p. 63). The situation is particularly dangerous since “there are currently no overarching political or legal structures that can provide for the orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreements over Arctic resources or sea-lanes” (p. 71). “[T]he Arctic countries are likely to unilaterally grab as much territory as possible and exert sovereign control over opening sea-lanes wherever they can. In this legal no man’s land, Arctic states are pursuing their narrowly defined national interests” (pp. 73–74). Borgerson is right in assuming that it’s no longer a matter of if, but when, the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free in the summer months. His assumptions about “lucrative natural-resource deposits”, however, can be debated. First, the USGS figures are not proven resources, but an assessment of as *yet undiscovered* oil and gas deposits, a detail overlooked by many crisis-mongers and euphorics alike. Second, and equally overlooked: the vast majority of these assumed “Arctic” resources are located on completely undisputed territory, on land and on the shelf within 200 miles from the shore. Third, as far as petroleum resources beyond this limit are concerned: hey, we’re talking about depths of several thousand metres—the Shtokman field in the Barents Sea is located at a couple of hundred metres depth—at much lower latitudes—and even that’s considered a challenge. On top of that, it’s not correct to say there aren’t any overarching legal and political structures that can regulate states’ behaviour in the Arctic; the Law of the Sea applies there, as elsewhere. And even in the hypothetical absence of such structures, states might nevertheless have found reason to cooperate instead of confronting each other. Tellingly, even though

the Arctic coastal states “compete” against each other for the Arctic shelf, they cooperate in collecting the information necessary to substantiate the claims they submit to the Continental Shelf Commission. The Canadians, Danes, and Russians accuse each other of claiming the North Pole without corroborating evidence. But when their scientists go out on expeditions to explore the Arctic shelf, they are, literally speaking, in the same boat.³

So a race for the Arctic? Hardly. But its story line has an irresistible pull on the media. For the last decade or so, the vast majority of researchers, politicians, and civil servants and what have you have been denying there’s a scramble for the Arctic. But the media circus goes on and on and on. Perhaps the narrative is so forceful that anything contradicting it is rationalized away as an anomaly. Perhaps it’s simply too good a story to let truth stand in the way. It’s fake news, but not out of bad will.

A couple of years ago, that is, nearly a decade after the “scramble for the Arctic” discourse emerged, a former colleague of mine was invited to speak about the Arctic on the major foreign policy TV programme on the Norwegian public broadcaster NRK. The presenter opened by saying, “a race for the Arctic is underway”. My colleague was given ample time to elaborate on the existing legal and political structures in the Arctic, the non-confrontational attitude of the Arctic states, the uncertainty about the existence of hydrocarbon resources and, not least, their inaccessibility. And, most importantly, she stressed, almost all these estimated resources are found on land or on the part of the shelf that is under undisputable national jurisdiction—in short: there is no race for the Arctic. When my colleague had finished, the interviewer turned to the camera to sum up the discussion: “As we have heard, a scramble for the Arctic is underway.”

*

If you do a search for the word *nordområdene* (northern areas aka High North) in Norwegian newspaper databases for the first few years of the 2000s, you only get a few results for articles on the downsizing of the military in Northern Norway, taking place at the time, and Russian reactions to the building of the Globus II radar at Vardø, together with an occasional report from northern Afghanistan (the “High North” of that country).⁴ Move forward a few years later and the number of hits reaches the thousands—a lot of Jonas Gahr Støre and multiple *Nordlys* editorials, but spread thematically from monitoring the environment to

culture debates, bioprospecting to young people's educational options. On its path from virtual obscurity to high visibility, the concept of the High North was given new substance. Used in the early 2000s almost exclusively in a defence policy context, by the end of the decade, it had become common political property. It is deployed in debates on environmental policy, cultural policy, and gender policy. It has a central place in business policy and research policy. All this while foreign policy is still moving upon the face of the waters. Nonetheless, it is criticized for being overly exclusive and elitist, as in this piece taken from a blog on the High North, *NordGlobal*:

Exclusive because foreign policy is not "common political property" and secondly because only a handful of players have clearly identified themselves as High North players. [...] Elitist because the important knowledge dimension is primarily linked to higher education and research institutions.⁵

"Could this", the author asks, "explain part of the apathy and lack of commitment to the High North strategy – worryingly evident not least among the younger generation?"⁶ Another contributor to the debate wonders: "Are we getting through to young people about opportunities in the High North? We asked [...] teens between 14 and 16 living in all parts of [the county of] Troms what they thought about this and other issues. Their answer was short and concise: You need to tell us you're there – we're not mind-readers!"⁷ The High North project's strong emphasis on scientific research and the widespread neglect of people and society are also criticized:

In its High North policy, the government has replaced the sustainability perspective with an ecosystem perspective. Knowledge is natural science. The gaps in our knowledge are located in the Barents Sea, in the ice, and in the atmosphere. Not on land. [...] That is why polar bears get far more attention than the high dropout rate among secondary school students in Northern Norway. [...] The reality is that the High North strategy's scientific commitment turns the North into an object of scientific research, not a subject. It's scientific establishments in the South doing research on nature in the North. [...] [W]ho's going to pick up the ball when knowledge and parameters are built up in the South? And how is Northern Norway expected to strengthen its ability to drive economic development when almost all the science on the High North is about technology and

ecosystems? There is no invisible hand to transform hard science into sustainable and viable communities. Nor do I believe the government thinks there is either. But the scientific hub in the High North project sees the North as nature. And the hub is being put together in the South for the sake of the South. In the North, it is alienating and can easily result in apathy and opposition, this is, the ingredients of a lightweight [ultra-right] Progressive Party dinner. I only have one piece of advice for Støre. He needs to show Northern Norway that people and communities are the most important building blocks in the North.⁸

The Foreign Minister concluded his response as follows:

[The purpose of the government's] High North policy is to create the right conditions for jobs looking ahead. These jobs will be based on natural advantages; they will have modern goals and focus more and more on knowledge. That needs to be the strategy to get young people in the North to choose to work in the North. The secondary school dropout rate is one of Norway's most serious challenges, in all parts of the country. But this undertaking is about school policy. We can't turn every field of activity in the North into High North policy, or we'll simply lose focus. We are still in the beginning. We have set an agenda, mobilized resources, invested in new projects and stimulated learning and new public-private partnerships. This is how we intend to continue, in close cooperation with all people of good will in the North.⁹

Støre also serves up one of his stock remarks in this response: "Knowledge is the hub of the High North project."¹⁰ Increased focus on competence in and around the High North was something the Orheim Committee urged in 2003; Støre took the challenge shortly after becoming foreign minister when he unveiled his Barents 2020 initiative. It was not until a year later, however, that the concept of knowledge achieved its mantra-like status in High North policy. When it became clear in the autumn of 2006 that the Norwegian oil companies would not be own any part of the Shtokman gas field, the High North initiative suddenly risked landing on its belly. Competence-building was already in the air around the foreign minister's High North team, but was now given a material existence as ... er ... the hub of the High North project. Real economic investments in Northern Norway could be combined with preparations for oil and gas operations in the Barents Sea. The Foreign Ministry's High North budget increased year on year after

the Stoltenberg Government came took office,¹¹ and Barents 2020 has largely been filled with R&D projects related to the extraction of oil and gas on the continental shelf.¹² But the plan goes beyond oil and gas: in the 2009 follow-up to the government's High North strategy, the most important step was to establish a centre for climate and environment research in Tromsø. R&D is centre stage, especially technology and natural science, but because the government has moved across such a broad front and promised major investments in the North, expectations have been created of something more in the pipeline. Even Northern Norwegian scientific communities are complaining the initiative is too narrow to wit the CEO of the research company Norut: "[H]igh North research has until now just been one heck of a climate and environment laboratory".¹³ The branding of the High North project has caught the imagination to such a degree that what once was unmitigated foreign policy is now expected to tackle things such as parenthood, gender equality, and culture. Didn't Støre think it had all gone a bit too far? Even if he did express in the above quote great understanding of the critic's points and still repeated the "nobody will be left behind" slogan, we see a clear indication of a stop sign: not everything can be turned into High North policy.

There is a sense of fatigue here. What goes up, must come down, etc. The great Barents enthusiasm fizzled out after half a decade or so. High North euphoria lasted about as long. Thing started turning sour early in the second decade of the twenty-first century—you could almost hear the milk curdling, to put it like that. A great adventure had been promised and everyone had declared allegiance to "the High North and everything". But what were they really waiting for? Shtokman? The revitalization of the Northern Norwegian countryside? I don't know. If you ask me, there was at least a smidgen of ritual self-affirmation: North is good, don't you agree?—that's what we always knew. And now it's high time Oslo paid up if they're serious about it. Can Støre ever have wondered to himself: *I created a monster?* (In any event, his mantra the last few years as foreign minister was that the High North initiative is a *generation project*.¹⁴)

*

At around midday on 27 April 2010, Prime Ministers Dmitri Medvedev and Jens Stoltenberg, catching most people off guard, announced during an Oslo press conference that Norway and Russia had reached agreement on the maritime delimitation of the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean:

“We have agreed now on every aspect of this forty-year-old issue: the maritime delimitation line”,¹⁵ said Stoltenberg. “The agreement will be based on international law and the Law of the Sea. It is evenly balanced, and will serve both countries”. “The essence of our policy”, Stoltenberg continued, “is not speed racing, but cooperation and mutual achievement, and today our two nations have reached an understanding in this regard.” Medvedev added: “This has been a difficult issue and made cooperation between our countries difficult. Today we have reached agreement. We need to live with our neighbours in friendship and cooperation. Unresolved issues are always a source of tension.”

The Treaty on the Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and Arctic Ocean was duly signed in Murmansk by Foreign Ministers Sergei Lavrov and Jonas Gahr Støre on 15 September 2010 in the presence of Russian President Medvedev and Norwegian Prime Minister Stoltenberg.¹⁶ It was a compromise which divided the disputed area into two equal parts while also establishing a single common boundary to the continental shelf and economic zones. Entering into force 7 July 2011, it consists of three parts: the border agreement and two annexes on fisheries and transboundary hydrocarbon deposits, both of which are integral parts of the treaty. The fisheries appendix broadly commits the parties to keeping the Joint Norwegian–Russian Fisheries Commission in place. On a more specific note, the 1975 agreement between Norway and USSR on cooperation in the fishing industry, and the 1976 agreement concerning mutual relations in the field of fisheries, will remain in force for fifteen years after the delimitation treaty comes into force. At the end of that period, both agreements will remain in force for successive six-year terms, unless one of the parties notifies the other at least six months before the expiry of the six-year term of its intention to terminate one or both. In the previously disputed area within 200 nautical miles from the Norwegian or Russian mainland, the technical regulations concerning, in particular, mesh and minimum catch size, set by each of the parties for their fishing vessels, shall continue to apply for a transitional period of two years from the treaty’s entry into force. The appendix concerning transboundary hydrocarbon deposits provides instructions for so-called unitization in the exploitation of transboundary hydrocarbon deposits whereby such deposits shall be exploited as a unit in a way that both parties have agreed on.

The unexpected announcement of the delimitation line deal in April 2010 was a national event in Norway. To this day, foreign policy buffs

still ask each other, “Where were you when the delimitation agreement was announced?” And many remember exactly where they were—as for myself, I was getting a cup of coffee from the kitchen at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, when someone literally screamed from around the corner: “Have you heard?” What Norway and Russia had engineered in their talks about the Barents Sea delimitation line had immense symbolic power in Norway: the longest outstanding issue with Russia, our great-power neighbour in the east, had finally been resolved. And the fact that the delimitation agreement was a genuinely well-crafted compromise chimed well with the Norwegian self-image as a global peacemaker.

And for the country’s High North politics: back on track. Let the band start playing again.

*

Just when the High North buzz seemed to be tapering off, the legacy of Foreign Minister Jonas was saved—and Prime Minister Jens’s as well, for that matter. The delimitation line with the Russians is considered one of the biggest achievements in Norwegian post-War foreign policy. In 2012, Jens moved Jonas from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Health, in an operation generally referred to as the next step at the “prime minister school”. Jonas needed experience of domestic politics to qualify as Jens’ successor. The domestic scene was also more suitable for rustling up a more Labour-friendly image of the wealthy and Science Po educated intellectual from Oslo West. Another intellectual, researcher Espen Barth Eide from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, took over as foreign minister in the last year of Stoltenberg Jr’s reign. He’d been state secretary in the same ministry in Jens’s first government in the early 2000s, exactly between the end of the big Barents euphoria and the start of the High North one. In other words, he was familiar with the Northern scene and been around the block a few times. With the delimitation victory digested, it was plain sailing in the North—critical voices had taken a break.

Jens Stoltenberg was an extraordinarily popular prime minister, and after his dignified behaviour in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in July 2011, where he stood for national unity, he became a “father of the country”, just like his mentor Gro Harlem Brundtland a few years earlier had been proclaimed “mother of the country”. But countries sometimes get tired of their parents and want change, if for no other reason than for the sake of change itself. In the parliamentary elections of 2013,

a “blue-blue” coalition of the centre-right Conservative Party and the (relatively) ultra-right Progressive Party swept into the governmental offices. Jens went off to Brussels to become NATO boss; Jonas was duly elected new leader of the Labour Party.

The new occupant of the Foreign Minister’s office was Børge Brende, a moderate and experienced but still relatively young conservative. He had been managing director at the World Economic Forum in Genève and had served for nearly a decade as deputy chairman of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development, an advisory panel for the Chinese government. The latter position made him particularly suited to untangle the biggest Gordian knot in Norwegian foreign politics at the time, the ice front between China and Norway following the decision by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee to award the 2010 prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo. These soured relations were the source of intense frustration in Norway, not least because the committee is entirely independent of the government. Those with a conspiratorial tendency find pleasure in believing the award was a final dig in the ribs by Thorbjørn Jagland, chairman of the Nobel Committee and former prime minister, directed at his opponents in the Labour Party, Jens and Jonas, who were now left to mop up the mess. Be that as it may, my point is that the new foreign minister, competent as he is, had essentially been focused on other things, not on northern matters.

*

Although Norwegian diplomats sat in the embassy in Beijing and in general consulates in Guangzhou and Shanghai without any contact with Chinese authorities, in the shadows, so to speak, a new area of common concern was emerging which might help repair relations with China: the Arctic. I’m not talking about the Arctic Council, China’s bid for observer status and all of that—see Chap. 1 for details. No, I’m talking about the development of formalized ties between Chinese and Norwegian Polar researchers, from both the natural and social sciences, sponsored, *inter alia*, by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While the Polar Research Institute of China and the Norwegian Polar Institute were already working together within the natural sciences, collaboration on Arctic social science research took off when the Research Council of Norway (with money from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in 2012 approved a large research project on Asian countries and the Arctic (AsiArctic) to the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo, my own home

institution. The project manager was my predecessor in the director's chair, Leiv Lunde, with whom I worked as research director for three years. Leiv was a former diplomat and state secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and his excellent diplomatic skills came in handy. As it turned out, this Norwegian research project had the welcome (and possibly intended) side effect of turning Arctic science into a flourishing conduit of exchange between Norway and China during diplomacy's little ice age. And it was a good match. Connections both professional and personal were established between people at the Polar Research Institute of China, the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, and several Shanghai universities, as the main partners on the Chinese side and counterparts in Norway. Just like the 1990s, international cooperation in areas of little political sensitivity was actively cultivated by the Norwegian government to improve relations with a great power out there. Science is always a reward thing to play with—and Shanghai was the new Murmansk.

After three years as FNI director, Leiv returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to a tailor-made position as strategy director, working directly with the Minister himself. China had top priority, and two years later, a few days before Christmas 2016, the governments of the People's Republic of China and the Kingdom of Norway announced normalization of relations between the two.¹⁷ As with the delimitation agreement with Russia six years earlier, most people were taken off guard. The Chinese ice front was another one of those “it might take decades” issues discussed in Norwegian foreign policy circles—and the announcement of the normalization of relations a new “where were you when...?” moment.

*

Little did I know that Shanghai would also become my own new Murmansk. For a good decade from the mid-1990s on, Murmansk had been my “home away from home”, the slogan of our favourite hotel Polyarnye Zori (named, incidentally, after the regional nuclear power town). Publicly funded research projects had made me an expert on the region, and I was a small cog in the big Norwegian machinery to create a Barents border paradise and stabilize relations with big bear Russia. When I took over as FNI director in spring 2015, the Barents euphoria had long since evaporated, and the Ukrainian crisis was casting new shadows on the northern border region—although both Norway and Russia were determined to shield cross-border cooperation from the sanctions.

China was now at the centre of attention in Norwegian foreign politics, and Chinese–Norwegian Arctic networks were cultivated as tentative approach to thawing relations before the politicians agreed to a normalization. As the new director, I didn't expect I'd be going to China on a regular basis—my predecessor had, after all, travelled there primarily in his capacity as manager of our AsiArctic project, not as director of the institute. But our China experts told me it would help them in their work if the new director showed his face to their partners, so off I went in autumn 2015. I had spent most of my career trying to modify Norwegians' stereotypical ideas of Russians, and now, I was heading into another “stereotype-heavy” country, not least in an Arctic context. The general perception in the West in this respect is that “the Chinese are coming”. “Scramble-mongers” had worried: would China respect the Law of the Sea in the Arctic or demand a slice of the continental shelf? Others, a tad more realistically, saw China using its newly flexed financial muscle to buy itself *de facto* influence in Arctic affairs, especially by engaging in the mineral extraction business. (How refreshing then, when a visiting Shanghai scholar at FNI concluded in her research that, “the Arctic needs China more than China needs the Arctic”.) Combine that with the stereotypical image of the po-faced Chinese, then we're off again.

I know I sound like a born-again China-lover when I say that whatever the prejudices I brought with me to China, they didn't last very long. I know I sound embarrassingly naïve when I admit to how surprised I was to meet directors and researchers who were nothing if not forthcoming, sensible, receptive, completely conversant in “Western” social sciences, and relaxed and informal at that. How different from what I was used to in Russia earlier in my career, where opinionated directors saw meetings with foreigners as a chance to compete and were incessantly in need of approval or acceptance. I went home and told my friends that the cultural differences between Norwegians the Chinese were smaller than with the Russians. I wanted to go back, and within a few months I was invited to a book launch in Shanghai; two of my books on Arctic politics had been translated into Chinese. In brief, that turned out to be one of the funniest afternoons and evenings I've ever had—when I saw the pomp and ceremony they'd organized, I realized I just had to “go in there and play star for a day”. There were banners imprinted with my name; the translators were there, the publisher's from Beijing, friends and strangers. And beers at the Shanghai German Oktoberfest post-launch.

My next visit had a more serious purpose. Just a few months after the Shanghai book release, political relations between China and Norway were normalized. The Norwegian Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs would soon be doing the rounds in the strategically most important Chinese cities—wouldn't a little Arctic séance at the Shanghai Institutes of International Studies be a good idea? I was called in by the Foreign Office at short notice and did my bit to boost the new romance between the Eastern great power and the northern small state, with dignitaries from both sides in the front row. But it was not just a show, I felt; we were building relations that had political implications—this was for real, and I was on board.

Shanghai had become the new Murmansk, and I the new Enthusiast, naïvely disregarding the fact that I didn't know the first thing about the country I was growing to like and respect.

*

Norwegian High North politics was thrown outwards and eastwards—in big centrifugal Arctic waves. But it also turned inwards. “Step two” in the government's High North Strategy, *New Building Blocks in the High North* from 2009, was a purely domestic policy document. The 2014 Strategy, *The North Globe*, similarly focused on the domestic side of Norwegian High North politics, but had an even stronger leaning towards business development than its predecessors. The 2017 *High North Strategy: between Geopolitics and Community Development* was published jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization. Priorities throughout are business development, infrastructure, education and research, environmental safety, and preparedness. Issuing High North strategies has become a regular rehearsal by governments of different colours—no longer surrounded by euphoria, but enough to keep the “mayors”, “practitioners”, “warriors” and “foxes” happy, to recall my categories of enthusiasts in Chap. 4.

When the Shtokman project was finally shelved, not least because the “shale gas revolution” made it unprofitable, the air once again went quietly out of the Norwegian High North balloon. But again the emperor found new clothes to put on: “High North” attire was out, “Arctic waves” were in. Norway made a forceful entry onto the international Arctic scene, branding itself as the Arctic nation per se. Norwegian High North politics was directed away from the near abroad to the Circumpolar North, out of Russia's clammy hands and into

the global community. The scenery may have changed, but the basic rhythm is the same: the Arctic is a stage particularly suitable for political song and dance.

*

In 2016, slugger journalist Skjalg Fjellheim in Northern Norway's biggest newspaper, *Nordlys*—home to the High North Enchantment 10–15 hears earlier—published an article called “The story of the big conference awakening that has haunted the northern part of the country”.¹⁸ “We have to talk about the Northern Norwegian Conference Man”, he starts out. When they come together, “what we get is Northern Norwegian complacency on a massive scale. [...] We anesthetize ourselves with hackneyed phrases about the region as a “national powerhouse”. And so on. The result is an image of Northern Norway as the land of milk and honey of the future”. The region, in Fjellheim's opinion, is facing enormous challenges in terms of the economy, in education and jobs, but nobody talks about that when the Conference Men get together. Clinging on to hopes of a magical future fuelled by oil and gas in a post-Parisian world is not, perhaps, the most future-proof strategy.

The perpetual song and dance at the High North conferences stand in the way of a confrontation with reality. Nobody dares say anything that could be perceived as “troublesome or disturbing”; there's an “absence of interaction and contrary positions, [...] dynamics and substance”; there are “fewer and fewer knowledgeable critics”. “The Northern Norwegian super enthusiasts have gained the moral high ground. They're unbeatable, a global first division. There's a deafening consensus, like in an echo chamber, combined with a yearning for affirmation”.

I wish someone told me that when I was young.

NOTES

1. For a thorough discussion of the continental shelf regime, see Jensen (2014).
2. See, for example, *The Guardian*, 2 August 2007. The ensuing discussion on the “race to the Arctic” is explored by, for instance (and note the titles!), Anderson (2009) in *After the Ice: Life, Death and Politics in the New Arctic*; Howard (2009) in *The Arctic Goldrush: The New Race for Tomorrow's Natural Resources*; Sale and Potapov (2010) in *The Scramble*

- for the Arctic: Ownership, Exploitation and Conflict in the Far North*; and Zellen (2009) in *Arctic Doom, Arctic Boom: The Geopolitics of Climate Change in the Arctic*.
3. Canada and Denmark have organized joint cruises to explore the Arctic continental shelf, and they have also had Russians on board.
 4. Hønneland and Jensen (2008, p. 91).
 5. "Alle skal med" ["Everybody on Board!"], www.nordglobal.no, 23 October 2009.
 6. Ibid.
 7. "Å feste gummistrikken i nordområdeungdom" ["To Fasten the Rubber Band to High North Youngsters"], www.nordglobal.no, 8 December 2009.
 8. "Protestene fra nord" ["Protests from the North"], feature article by political scientist and writer Bente Aasjord in *Dagbladet*, 5 September 2009.
 9. "Satsing i nord" ["Initiatives in the North"], comment by Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre in *Dagbladet*, 10 September 2009.
 10. Ibid.
 11. See Hønneland and Jensen (2008, pp. 39–43). In addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' budget for High North measures, the government listed other ministries' actions in the High North. This is what left the government open to criticism for having lumped together incongruous odds and ends and called them High North measures. The government could probably have avoided some of the negative responses if it had left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' own High North budget alone.
 12. Some of the main initiatives include the development of a comprehensive surveillance and warning system for the waters and coastal areas in the North ("Barentshavet på skjerm") under the leadership of the research concern SINTEF; harmonizing Norwegian and Russian health, safety, and environment standards in the Barents Sea headed by the classification society Det Norske Veritas (DNV GL); and the establishment of a High North logistics department at Nord University.
 13. CEO Ivan C. Burkow of the research company Norut quoted in *Nordlys*, 10 December 2009.
 14. See, e.g., *Nordlys*, 4 September 2009.
 15. www.nrk.no, 27 April 2010.
 16. For a detailed examination, see Jensen (2011).
 17. [https://fido.nrk.no/7b59bd43198670ab3611480abe0fbc743a411d4235542f3e17fe8277f88b880a/statement_kina\[1\].pdf](https://fido.nrk.no/7b59bd43198670ab3611480abe0fbc743a411d4235542f3e17fe8277f88b880a/statement_kina[1].pdf).
 18. *Nordlys*, 7 January 2016.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, Alun. 2009. *After the Ice: Life, Death and Politics in the New Arctic*. London: Virgin Books.
- Borgerson, Scott S. 2008. Arctic Meltdown: The Economic and Security Implications of Global Warming. *Foreign Affairs* 87: 63–77.
- Hønneland, Geir, and Leif Christian Jensen. 2008. *Den nye nordområdepolitikken* [The New Politics on the High North]. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Howard, Roger. 2009. *The Arctic Goldrush: The New Race for Tomorrow's Natural Resources*. London: Continuum.
- Jensen, Øystein. 2011. The Barents Sea: The Treaty Between Norway and the Russian Federation concerning Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean. *International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law* 26: 151–168.
- Jensen, Øystein. 2014. *The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf: Law and Legitimacy*. Leiden: Brill/Nijhoff.
- Sale, Richard, and Eugene Potapov. 2010. *The Scramble for the Arctic: Ownership, Exploitation and Conflict in the Far North*. London: Frances Lincoln.
- Zellen, Barry Scott. 2009. *Arctic Doom, Arctic Boom: The Geopolitics of Climate Change in the Arctic*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

INDEX

A

Aftenposten, 37

Arctic Council, 10, 13–16, 18, 63, 66, 68, 84, 94

Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), 13

B

Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR, Barents Region), 7, 53

Bondevik, Kjell Magne, 63, 64, 67, 68, 75

Borgerson, Scott, 14, 87

Brende, Børge, 84, 94

Brezhnev, Leonid, 45

C

Centre Party (Norway), 64

Coast Guard (Norway), 7, 48

Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises (NHO), 61

Conservative Party (Norway), 94

D

Dagens Næringsliv, 73

E

Eide, Espen Barth, 93

Eurasianism, 46, 50

Exclusive economic zone, 4–7, 10, 65, 84, 85, 92

F

Finnmark, 4, 29, 33, 62

Fishery Protection Zone around Svalbard, 6, 7, 17, 27, 48, 51

Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI), 32, 50, 93, 94

G

Gazprom, 11, 12, 70, 76

Gorbachev, Mikhail, 8, 27, 45, 50

Grey Zone (Barents Sea), 6, 70, 72

H

- High North Strategy, The Government's* (Norway), 65, 73, 74, 91, 97
- High North Strategy—between Geopolitics and Community Development* (Norway), 12, 97

I

- Ilulissat Declaration, 15
- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), 48, 51

J

- Jensen, Leif Christian, 77
- Joint Norwegian–Russian Commission on Environmental Protection [... Environmental Commission], 9
- Joint Norwegian–Russian Commission on Nuclear Safety, 9
- Joint Norwegian–Russian Fisheries Commission, 27, 92

K

- Kirkenes, 10, 18, 26, 27, 30, 38, 39, 65, 68, 77, 78, 83, 84
- Kirkenes Declaration, 7
- Kola Nuclear Power Plant, 9, 51
- Kola Peninsula, 3, 4, 9, 27, 33, 39, 49, 51, 52
- Kozyrev, Andrei, 27, 43, 46, 50

L

- Labour Party (Norway), 11, 28, 64, 94
- Lavrov, Sergei, 92
- Lunde, Leiv, 95

M

- MacKay, Peter, 87
- Medvedev, Dmitri, 91, 92
- Moseev, Ivan, 54–57
- Murmansk, 8, 27, 29, 34, 36, 37, 39, 43, 46, 48, 49, 52, 68, 75, 76, 84, 92, 95, 97

N

- NATO, 4, 27, 48, 49, 51, 52, 57, 94
- New Building Blocks in the High North, The Next Step in the Government's High North Strategy* (Norway), 67
- Nordlys* (newspaper, Norway), 11, 68, 70–74, 88, 98
- Northern Dimension (EU), 13, 66
- Northern Fleet (Russia), 4, 33, 48
- North Globe, The* (strategy, Norway), 12, 97
- North-Western Russia, 9, 10, 32, 33, 50, 51, 54–56, 70, 75, 76

O

- Orheim Committee, 63, 64, 68, 90

P

- Pechenganikel, 9
- Peter the Great, 44
- Petersen, Jan, 70
- Pettersen, Oddrun, 35
- Pomor Fairy-Tales*, 55, 56
- Pomor trade, 28, 29, 31, 54
- Pomor zone, 65
- Primakov, Yevgeny, 46
- Progressive Party (Norway), 90, 94
- Putin, Vladimir, 50

R

Region building, 31, 52, 74

S

Sámi, 26, 29, 31, 73, 74

Shtokman (gas field), 11, 12, 17, 18, 69, 75, 76, 83, 87, 90, 97

Slavophiles, 45, 53

Socialist Left Party (Norway), 11, 64, 70

Solberg, Erna, 73

Statoil, 12, 17, 62, 64, 76

Stoltenberg, Jens, 57, 64, 65, 91–93

Stoltenberg, Thorvald, 7, 27, 28, 32, 34, 46, 54, 57, 84, 92

Støre, Jonas Gahr, 11, 64, 67, 73, 84, 88, 92

Svalbard, 2, 6, 7, 10, 15, 48, 49, 51, 86

Svalbard Treaty, 6

T

Thatcher, Margaret, 45

Treaty on the Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and Arctic Ocean (delimitation treaty, Barents Sea), 92

Tromsø, 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, 30, 64, 67, 68, 72, 73, 78, 84, 91

U

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), 87

UNCLOS. *See* UN Law of the Sea Convention, 85, 86

UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (Continental Shelf Commission), 14, 15, 86

UN Fish Stocks Agreement, 49

UN Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS), 85

W

Westernizers, 45

Y

Yelstsin, Boris, 46

Yevdokimov, Yuri, 34, 48

Z

Zhirinovskiy, Vladimir, 46