

The New Strategic Battleground

The Pentagon and NATO in the Arctic

By Rick Rozoff

In the waning days of the Bush presidency while the domestic press corps was preoccupied with the impending inauguration of his successor, the White House effectively sneaked through a major, groundbreaking directive on the Arctic.

What little was reported on the matter at the time and since was perfunctory and provided an innocuous gloss to a deadly serious initiative.

The subject is the National Security Presidential Directive 66 of January 12, 2009, the contents of which will be detailed shortly and will be demonstrated to contrast starkly with what scant coverage was accorded it, such as items bearing titles like "White House Directive Guides Policy on Arctic" from the *Washington Post* and "Bush issues U.S. policy on Arctic energy supplies" from Reuters.

National Security Presidential Directive 66 can be read in its entirety at:
<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-66.htm>

It contains as its first two points:

1. The United States has broad and fundamental national security interests in the Arctic region and is prepared to operate either independently or in conjunction with other states to safeguard these interests. These interests include such matters as missile defense and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations; and ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight.
2. The United States also has fundamental homeland security interests.

The Directive also includes the intent to "Preserve the global mobility of United States military and civilian vessels and aircraft throughout the Arctic region" and mandates in its fourth point that

"The Senate should act favorably on U.S. accession to the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea promptly, to protect and advance U.S. interests, including with respect to the Arctic. Joining will serve the national security interests of the United States, including the maritime mobility of our Armed Forces worldwide. It will secure U.S. sovereign rights over extensive marine areas, including the valuable natural resources they contain."

The Reuters dispatch alluded to above adds that "The presidential directive represents U.S. policy on the Arctic and carries over to the incoming Barack Obama administration. The policy, which updates a 1994 presidential directive on the Arctic, remains in effect until it is changed by a future president."

If next to no one Stateside paid any attention to this development, writers on the other side of the world understood its import precisely.

Four days later *Voice of Russia* ran a feature which said, inter alia:

"In his final days in power, President George W. Bush asserted U.S. military 'sea power' over the oil-rich Arctic in a fresh effort to ensure permanent American presence in the region and the deployment of missile defense facilities there.

"According to the text of a sweeping new directive on the Arctic released just eight days before Barack Obama is to be sworn in, the United States declares the territories within the Arctic Circle a zone of its strategic interests and the new Administration is advised to expand the US foothold in the Arctic."

On January 28-29 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization held a meeting in the capital of Iceland on the Arctic, and endowed it with the quasi-academic sounding name of Seminar on Security Prospects in the High North.

The gathering did not include experts on climate change, geology or energy transportation but instead the Secretary General of NATO, its two top military commanders and the Chairman of the Military Committee "as well as many other decision-makers and experts from Allied countries." (*NATO International*, January 29, 2009)

The main address was by NATO's Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, whose observations and recommendations include, in addition to NATO humor in the form of a sophomoric play on words in the first paragraph, an incontestable claim to the Alliance's self-designated role as global military policeman in the service of Western "energy security":

"The Alliance's agenda recently appears to have been dominated by events in Afghanistan, the Caucasus and the Horn of Africa - areas that can rightly be described as 'hot'. So it is very welcome to shift our attention to a colder region.

"[T]he High North is going to require even more of the Alliance's attention in the coming years.

"As the ice-cap decreases, the possibility increases of extracting the High North's mineral wealth and energy deposits.

"At our Summit in Bucharest last year, we agreed a number of guiding principles for NATO's role in energy security, as well as five specific areas for possible NATO involvement....

"The third issue is territorial claims. The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the

Seas is the legal framework that applies to the Arctic Ocean – a fact that was reiterated by the five Arctic coastal states at their meeting in Greenland last May.

"However, it is already clear that there are certain differences of opinion between the five states over the delineation of the 200 nautical mile limits of the Exclusive Economic Zones, as well as over the extension of the continental shelves.

"NATO provides a forum where four of the Arctic coastal states can inform, discuss, and share, any concerns that they may have. And this leads me directly onto the next issue, which is military activity in the region.

"Clearly, the High North is a region that is of strategic interest to the Alliance. But so are the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Mediterranean."

His Arctic manifesto, anything but a modest proposal, was commented upon by a press agency:

"De Hoop Scheffer noted that sea routes through the Arctic will be significantly shorter than many of those that currently require passage through the Suez or Panama canals.

"He said the melting of the Arctic will open up opportunities for the extraction of the mineral wealth and energy deposits in this area. In this context, NATO will have a role to play as the alliance's heads of state and government have identified energy security as a new task for NATO." (Trend News Agency, January 30, 2009)

Note that Scheffer's earlier quotes were structured in such a manner that, after skirting the main topic for several paragraphs, emphasis was finally laid on "military activity in the region" in relation to and, as will be addressed later, even more important than "opportunities for the extraction of the mineral wealth and energy deposits."

Confirming Scheffer's plans was NATO Supreme Allied Commander General John Craddock, late of ordering anyone in Afghanistan suspected of involvement in the drug trade to be shot dead, whose address was reported on a NATO website as follows:

"General John Craddock, attending a NATO seminar in Reykjavik, Iceland examining future security issues, spoke of the need to think strategically when planning for security in the High North.

"General Craddock opined that NATO could contribute greatly to facilitating cooperation in areas such as the development and security of shipping routes, energy security, surveillance and monitoring, search and rescue, resource

exploration and mining...." (*NATO International*, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, January 29, 2009)

Having read Craddock's and Scheffer's comments an uninformed reader, or one unaware of the international and historical context, would be excused for thinking that the world's first global military bloc was going in for some harmless diversion by dabbling in the extractive industry, as it earlier was in humanitarian intervention, disaster relief, ridding the coasts of Africa of poachers and pirates and Afghanistan of opium. Again a dose of reality from the *Voice of Russia*:

"NATO is seriously thinking of [establishing] military presence in the Arctic. It considers global warming and consequently an Arctic thaw as an occasion for this. NATO sees this as a possibility for its Arctic expansion.

"When taking into account the fact that all Arctic littoral nations but Russia are NATO member countries, it is quite clear who the alliance considers its rival in this region." (*Voice of Russia*, January 30, 2009)

But one doesn't have to go as far as Russia to determine the true purpose of the Reykjavik conference: "At least four people were arrested outside the Reykjavik conference venue Wednesday before the meeting - two of them for burning a NATO flag. Many Icelanders oppose the volcanic island's membership in the military bloc, fearing it compromises the nation's independence." (Associated Press, January 29, 2009)

Icelanders themselves realized what was at stake and the protesters turned out to confront the NATO conclave in actions that "resulted in a violent clash with police for the first time in Iceland since 1949." (Fox News, January 30, 2009) The US news source doesn't provide background information to explain what occurred in 1949, as it might reflect poorly on the NATO and its chief architect, the US. Sixty years ago as Iceland was being pulled into the newly formed Alliance, protests and riots broke out in the capital and had to be, as with three days ago, put down by force in the name of 'Euro-Atlantic values' and the 'Atlantic community.'

The same Fox News dispatch, though, does reveal these facts:

"The most favored political party right now in Iceland is the Left-Greens, which will be a principal member of the interim coalition government here. It doesn't

fully support possible European Union membership for Iceland, but more significantly for the US, it would like to pull Iceland out of NATO.

"Iceland was a founding member of North Atlantic Alliance. Due to its utterly strategic location just under the Arctic Circle it played a crucial role for the U.S. during the Cold War. There was a U.S. air base on the island up until 2006."

NATO's 'military activity in the High North' may then be put to something other than its main purpose of confronting Russia. The Icelandic protesters realized what the Fox writer did when he finished his report with "The image Wednesday of a NATO flag being burned by protesters in front of a meeting held by the Alliance cannot be too pleasing to the U.S."

One has come to expect of NATO to dutifully and punctually follow every twist and turn, every disingenuous casus belli proffered by the US - war to defend the concept of national sovereignty (Iraq, 1991), war to override national sovereignty (Yugoslavia, 1999), war on behalf of narco-trafficking extremists (Kosovo, 1999), war to exterminate anyone accused of the same (Colombia since 1999, Afghanistan now) - but why the urgency just now?

Three years ago the London *Times* in a report from Norway wrote about what it called the "Arctic Bridge" and "The fabled Northwest Passage, from the Atlantic to the Pacific through the Arctic archipelago of Canada," remarking that the two could insure that "Cargo from Europe to the Far East could cut 4,000 miles from the journey by cruising through the passage, compared with the route through the Panama Canal...." (*The Times*, February 11, 2006)

And a year and a half ago a Russian press source stated "the Northern Sea Route, running through the Arctic Ocean along Russia's northern coast, is the shortest way from Europe to Asia and the Pacific coast of America, which will make it easy to transport oil and gas from Arctic deposits." (Russian Information Agency Novosti, July 25, 2007).

In the same month the US government's Radio Free Europe revealed yet more: "The Arctic and Antarctica are the last vast untapped reservoirs of mineral resources on the planet. Underneath the Arctic Ocean, there are gigantic reserves of tin, manganese,

nickel, gold, platinum, and diamonds. But the Arctic's most lucrative treasure is the enormous deposits of oil and gas, which could amount to 25 percent of the world's resources." (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, July 27, 2007)

The following month a major Chinese newspaper wrote about the Arctic: "This will probably be the last big shift in ownership of territory in the history of the earth," said Lars Kullerud, who advises developing states on submissions at the GRID-Arendal foundation, run by the UN Environment Program and Norway. 'Many countries don't realize how serious it is.'" (People's Daily August 16, 2007)

At the same time the Russian daily Rossiiskaya Gazeta said: "the division of the Arctic is the start of a new redistribution of the world." (Agence France-Presse, August 3, 2007)

Confirmatory of the above and serving as a spur to both the US National Security Presidential Directive 66 and the NATO conference on the Arctic of four days ago is a U.S. Geological Survey of May of 2008. The complete report can be read at: <http://geology.com/usgs/arctic-oil-and-gas-report.shtml>

The gist of it is:

"The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has completed an assessment of undiscovered conventional oil and gas resources in all areas north of the Arctic Circle. Using a geology-based probabilistic methodology, the USGS estimated the occurrence of undiscovered oil and gas in 33 geologic provinces thought to be prospective for petroleum. The sum of the mean estimates for each province indicates that 90 billion barrels of oil, 1,669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids may remain to be found in the Arctic, of which approximately 84 percent is expected to occur in offshore areas."

A Reuters report of two months after the release of the report bore the title "Arctic's oil could meet world demand for three years" and a synopsis of the Geological Survey study framed its significance in these words: "The unexplored Arctic contains about one-fifth of the world's undiscovered oil and nearly a third of the natural gas yet to be found....The untapped reserves are beneath the seafloor in geopolitically controversial areas above the Arctic Circle." (*Live Science*, July 24, 2008)

However, the geological survey only substantiated in detail what was known substantially years before and merely accelerated initiatives long in the planning. A year before the survey results were released, "U.S. Senator Richard G. Lugar said Russia is aspiring to take control over potential energy reserves in the Arctic Ocean at the expense of U.S. interests." (Russian Information Agency Novosti, May 16, 2007) The same Russian feature added, "The senator, known for his anti-Russian statements, urged U.S. authorities to join the struggle for the polar oil and gas resources by ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea."

That is precisely what the Bush report of 22 days ago recommended, oddly enough drawing plaudits in many Western quarters because it supposedly signaled a reversal of general Bush era "unilateralism."

A flawed and seriously mistaken reading.

Washington will now sign onto the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea the better to wage war for energy and military positioning in the top of the world and its newly rediscovered reverence for international norms and for alleged multilateralism is reducible to a closing of the ranks with its NATO allies against Russia and, as is of late increasingly mentioned, China in the Arctic Circle.

Regarding the original recommendation on ratifying the Convention by US Senator Richard Lugar, it's important to recall that the same Lugar led the charge to invoke NATO's Article 5 mutual defense clause - in reality a war pact - against Russia in June of 2006 in the US Senate on the same topic of "energy security."

Lugar's own senatorial website reported at the time:

"On Thursday, June 8, 2006, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Dick Lugar's resolution that calls upon the United States to lead the discussion at NATO headquarters about the role the alliance could play in energy security and the President to submit to Congress a report that details 'a strategy for NATO to develop secure, sustainable, and reliable sources of energy, including contingency plans if current energy resources are put at risk.'

"'NATO is now facing new challenges and new priorities. To be fully relevant to the security and well being of the people of its member nations, NATO must think and act globally,' said Lugar.

"International developments are calling attention to the growing importance of energy security for NATO member countries and other non-member partners... On a global scale, increased competition for finite supplies of oil and gas could lead to conflict that would directly or indirectly involve NATO member states... Earlier this year, Lugar introduced the Energy Diplomacy and Security Act (S. 2435), which 'recognizes energy security to be a foremost concern for United States national security and would realign of our diplomatic priorities to meet energy security challenges.'" (Senator Richard G. Lugar, June 12, 2006)

Lugar has not been alone in agitating for invoking energy issues as a pretext for military expansion, including expansion of a strategic character, as what he and others like him are demanding is, even when not overtly mentioned, direct confrontation between the world's two major nuclear powers.

In 2007 a US commission released a study called 'Strategy of cooperation on the navies of the 21st century,' in which "The future situation in the Arctic was included by the document's authors into the list of the 'new era's challenges', which the USA is to be ready for." ("US Warns on Possible Military Conflict Around Arctic Resources," Financial Information Service [Russia], October 19, 2007)

The same year this version of the new Bush Arctic doctrine was adumbrated:

"As much as a quarter of the world's oil and gas supplies could be in the region, Rear-Admiral Brian Salerno of the U.S. Coast Guard said today, citing statistics from the U.S. Geological Survey. Global warming in the Arctic has 'implications for national energy security.'

"'Will we have a constant aircraft carrier presence? I don't know, but we might.'

"The U.S. Navy pledged to increase its fleet of ships and other craft in the Arctic, a day after Canada promised to build as many as eight new vessels to patrol the region." (Bloomberg News, July 10, 2007)

The same month this development surfaced: "For the first time this week, top US Naval and Coast Guard commanders are meeting with Arctic scientists and climate experts to assess the situation... [T]he US 'absolutely' must boost its presence in the Arctic region as part of an international coalition. The US would establish forward

bases, increase its fleet patrols of Arctic waters, review its Arctic policies." (Deutsche Press-Agentur, July 11, 2007)

Which 'international coalition' was intended was evident last week in Iceland. Aware not only of NATO states' plans for the Arctic - for energy, transit and military purposes – Russia sent two mini-submersibles to the Arctic Circle in August of 2007, renewing 80-year-old Russian claims to a large swathe of the region and planting a flag at the sea bed of the North Pole, later pressing its claim at the United Nations.

At roughly the same time Russia resumed strategic bomber patrols in the world's oceans for the first time since the end of the Soviet Union, including in the Arctic Circle, off the coast of Alaska and over the North and Norwegian Seas. After the August 2007 Russian polar expedition, in a feature entitled "Arctic expedition backs up Russia's claim for larger economic zone," it was reported:

"Experts believe the Arctic Ocean contains about 100 billion tonnes of various hydrocarbons, mostly oil and gas, which is much more than the reserves of Saudi Arabia and twice more than Russia's land reserves....'If we manage to prove at the United Nations that the Lomonosov Ridge is a continuation of the Siberian platform - the Russian continental shelf - we will control about two-thirds of the entire hydrocarbon reserves of the Arctic Ocean." (Interfax, October 25, 2007)

An Indian daily had warned beforehand that:

"Experts doubt western nations will let Russia win its claim of the Arctic shelf in the U.N. no matter how solid its scientific evidence may be. Moreover, the U.S., acting through the Arctic Council, has been pushing to internationalise the Arctic Ocean — that is, secure free access to its seabed resources and trade routes even within Russia's exclusive economic zone." (The Hindu, July 16, 2007)

Washington was not slow to respond. In June of last year the Pentagon held a 12-day exercise, Northern Edge 2008, in Alaska, in which 5,000 soldiers, 120 aircraft and several warships participated. In anticipation of the war games, whose target was the Arctic, this warning was sounded from Moscow:

"Russia's military leadership will react to the large-scale US exercises in the northern latitudes by the adjustment of the plans of combat training of its army for the reliable protection of the country's national interests in the Arctic, the head of

the main combat training and service department of Russian troops, Lieutenant-General Vladimir Shamanov told Itar-Tass on Monday." (Itar-Tass, May 5, 2008)

The *New York Times* reported on a meeting in May of leaders of the Pentagon's Pacific Command, Northern Command and Transportation Command which strongly recommended in a letter that the Joint Chiefs of Staff endorsed a push by the Coast Guard to increase the ability to gain access to and control its Arctic waters.

In July, US Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Thad Allen testified before a committee of the US Congress and informed his audience "that Russia is getting ahead of the United States in the 'Arctic race' and the current U.S. administration must urgently revise its approach to Arctic exploration." A contention supported by Mead Treadwell, chairman of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, who added: "In the 20th century, the advent of aircraft, missiles, and missile defense made the Arctic region a major venue for projection of power and a frontier for protecting the security of North America, Asia and Europe."

"[A]n accessible Arctic Ocean also means new or expanded routes for the U.S. military sealift to move assets from one part of the world to another. The Commission believes polar icebreakers are an essential maritime component to guarantee that this U.S. polar mobility exists." (Russian Information Agency Novosti, July 17, 2008)

The same month, just days before being indicted by a federal grand jury, Alaska Senator Ted Stevens invoked alleged national security concerns over the Arctic: "Domestic resources — and in particular those in the Arctic and the Outer Continental Shelf — must be developed in the interest of national security, Stevens said." (Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, July 4, 2008)

The next month, August of 2008, the homeland security secretary, Michael Chertoff, toured Alaska's Arctic shores with the same US Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Thad Allen cited above.

And in September another senior US Coast Guard commander:

"... warned of the risk of conflict in the Arctic, unless disputes over international borders are resolved. Speaking to the BBC during an Arctic patrol flight, Rear

Adm Gene Brooks, in charge of the Coast Guard's vast Alaska region, appealed for a diplomatic deal. 'The potential is there with undetermined boundaries and great wealth for conflict, or competition. 'There's always a risk of conflict,' Adm Brookes said." (BBC News, September 10, 2008)

In October the the US 4th Marine Division's Antiterrorism Battalion conducted training at "The northernmost point in North America, Barrow, Alaska." (Marine Corps News, October 29, 2008)

The US is not alone in the new scramble for the Arctic, nor is the collective NATO plan simply related to energy. In a 2007 dispatch with the title "NATO Besieges Russia in the Arctic" the most dangerous aspect of the Alliance's drive into the Arctic was revealed:

"Amid great secrecy, NATO naval forces are trying to control the Arctic Ocean to continue the military bloc's expansion to Russia... the newspaper Military Industry Herald reported here.

"Like in the tensest times of the Cold War, troops from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are trying to take control of the Arctic route, said the newspaper....[T]he US Navy, in conjunction with its British allies, is meeting the challenge of displacing Russian submarines from the Arctic region." (*Prensa Latina*, March 29, 2007)

In March of 2007 the US and Britain held a joint submarine exercise under the polar ice cap, one that drew some attention because of the death of two British sailors. The drill, code named Ice Exercise 2007, was the occasion for this observation on a US Navy website:

"The submarine force continues to use the Arctic Ocean as an alternate route for shifting submarines between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. ...submarines can reach the western Pacific directly by transiting through international waters of the Arctic rather than through the Panama Canal." (Navy NewsStand, March 20, 2007)

A few days later the same source published these comments from Barry L. Campbell, head of operations at the U.S. Navy Arctic Submarine Laboratory:

"We're a worldwide Navy and the Navy's position is we should be able to operate in any ocean in the world....When you go through the Arctic, no one knows you're there....We expect all our subs to be able to operate in the Arctic....Our strategic position is to be able to operate anywhere in the world, and we see the Arctic as

part of that....[I]f we ever did have to fight a battle under there it would be a joint operation." (Navy NewsStand, March 29, 2007)

The key to understanding US and NATO military expansion into the Arctic is provided by this brief, matter of fact excerpt from a Russian news agency relating the firing of a submarine-launched ballistic missile in the Arctic:

"[A] Sineva intercontinental ballistic missile... was fired in the summer of 2006 from the North Pole by the submarine Yekaterinburg... [U]nder a thick icecap the submarine remains invisible to hostile observation satellites till the last moment. As a result, a retaliatory nuclear strike would be sudden and unavoidable." (Russian Information Agency Novosti, July 7, 2007)

That is, with US and NATO missile and satellite radar and interceptor missile facilities around the world and in space, the only place where Russia could retain a deterrence and/or retaliatory capacity against a crushing nuclear first strike is under the polar ice cap.

An earlier Russian reports confirms this perspective and the fear that without this capability Russia would be rendered completely defenseless in the event of a nuclear war. Commenting on the need for Russian strategic submarines to operate under the Arctic ice, Navy Commander Admiral Vladimir Masorin said:

"This training is needed to help strategic submarines of the Russian Fleet head for the Arctic ice region, which is the least vulnerable to an adversary's monitoring, and prepare for a response to a ballistic missile strike in the event of a nuclear conflict.

"In order to be able to fulfill this task - I mean the task of preserving strategic submarines - it is necessary to train Russian submariners to maneuver under the Arctic ice." (Interfax-Military, September 26, 2006)

To drive Russia out of the Arctic is the ultimate objective of NATO's new 'High North' strategy.

And to that end the US, Britain, Canada, Denmark (and its Greenland and Faroe Islands possessions), Norway, Iceland and increasing Germany, Finland and Sweden (the latter two historical neutrals rapidly moving toward NATO membership) have

been recruited for what might well be deemed an Arctic Operation Barbarossa.

Recently, for example:

-Britain is claiming a right part of the Arctic because of Rockall, "an 30-yard wide uninhabited rock in the North Atlantic. Britain annexed Rockall in 1955 – more than 50 years ago – and claims rights to its continental shelf." (*Daily Mail*, September 24, 2008)

"Liam Fox, the shadow defence secretary, told the *Telegraph*: 'Four of the five Arctic powers are Nato members, yet Nato seems ill-configured to be able to respond to the sort of activities we have seen from the Russians. We need to ensure Nato has the will and the capability to deter Russian activity that contravenes international laws or treaties.'" (*Sunday Telegraph*, May 18, 2008)

"In a bid to showcase new military and social investments in the North, and assert Canadian sovereignty along the Northwest Passage, [Prime Minister Stephen] Harper and his top ministers visited several Arctic communities... and - significantly - singled out Russia's increased military presence in the Arctic as a 'serious concern' for Canada... 'When we see a Russian Bear approaching Canadian air space, we meet them with an F-18', said [Defence Minister Peter] MacKay." (Canwest News Service, September 12, 2008)

"Canada is stepping up its military alertness along its northern frontier in response to Russia's 'testing' of its boundaries and recent Arctic grab, the prime minister said Friday." ('Canada boosts frontier troops as Russia eyes Arctic,' Agence France-Presse, September 19, 2008)

"Canada and the US say a past land dispute over 12,000 sq km of seabed elsewhere in the Beaufort Sea is being put aside in the name of defending against Russia's Arctic claims, which clash with those of the US, Canada, Denmark and Norway." (*Financial Times*, August 18, 2008)

"Harper has announced plans to build a new army training centre in the Far North at

Resolute Bay and to outfit a deep-water port for both military and civilian use at the northern tip of Baffin Island. His trip to the Arctic earlier this month was accompanied by the biggest military exercise in the region in years, with 600 soldiers, sailors and air crew participating." (Canadian Press, August 19, 2007)

- "Norway and Germany yesterday unveiled plans to exploit some of the Arctic's vast energy reserves... The nations' foreign ministers travelled to the Norwegian island of Spitsbergen to sign an agreement to explore and develop energy fields and to study the effects of global warming on the North Pole." (*The Telegraph*, August 31, 2007)

"One of Norway's new frigates is on its way to Svalbard in the Arctic for the first time. It's being sent in order to show Norway's presence and wave the flag. 'In future the frigates will form part of NATO's standing forces and will operate along the Norwegian coast, in areas with oil and gas production and not least in the Arctic where Norway has strategic interests,' said Navy Chief Jan Eirik Finseth in May this year." (*Aftenposten*, October 9, 2008)

"Norway expects NATO to help defend its Arctic borders given its involvement in the western military alliance's operations in Afghanistan, Defence Minister Anne-Grete Strom-Erichsen said." ('Norway links Afghan role to NATO support in Arctic,' Reuters, October 3, 2007)

"The goal [of military exercise Cold Response] is to train Norwegian troops, NATO Response Forces (NRF) and cooperating nations (Partnership for Peace/PfP) to operate in conflict regions during winter conditions.

"Norway organized its winter-climate Cold Response exercise — a March 6-22 event that brings together troops, aircraft and naval ships from 11 NATO and Partnership for Peace (PfP) countries — in an effort to combine air, sea and land forces and equipment into a front-line, efficient fighting group.

"Cold Response is being staged in the Nordland and Troms counties of northern Norway, located inside the Arctic Circle." (*Aftenposten*, March 17, 2006)

- "The Defence Minister Sten Tolgfors says that Sweden is ready to defend its Nordic neighbours and fellow EU members against any attack.

"Last week the Nordic and Scandinavian countries - Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland – signed a treaty on increased defence cooperation.

"Pointing to Russian patrols in the North the minister says that the Arctic region has a new strategic significance....The minister says that Sweden is now effectively linked to Nato, through military cooperation with Norway, as well as participating in the European Union's military." (Radio Sweden, November 20, 2008)

"Finland and Sweden started approaching NATO before the beginning of the conflict between Russia and Georgia.

"Back in 2006 the decision of Finnish and Swedish politicians was made on joining NATO's flying squad [response force]." (*Baltische Rundschau* [Lithuania], December 14, 2008)

- "We're six nations [United States, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Iceland], plus NATO, all coming together to exercise.'

'This [Operation Northern Viking in Iceland] is about showing the Icelandic people that NATO is committed to assisting with their defense'" (U.S. Air Forces in Europe, September 4, 2008)

- "The Nordic battlegroup consists of 2,700 personnel with Sweden as the lead nation supplying about 2,200 and the rest provided by Finland, Norway, Ireland and Estonia.

"Irish peacekeeping troops have been ordered to survive within the Arctic Circle in temperatures reaching -30c.

"The Nordic battlegroup consists of 2,700 personnel with Sweden as the lead nation supplying about 2,200 and the rest provided by Finland, Norway, Ireland and

Estonia." ('Troops take to the Arctic to test their survival skills,' *Irish Independent*, November 8, 2007)

-"[T]he Faeroes are worth a serious look because of their geostrategic position.

"Their significance is clearly seen through their complex relationship with Denmark and, through them, NATO (there is a NATO base in the country).

"[W]hen George W. Bush came to power [he and] his administration expressed interest in the Faeroes' NATO base for the missile defense plan. Suddenly, the Islands were valuable again.

"It is important to NATO to have full control of the whole North Atlantic region,' explained Samal Trondur Finnsson Johansen, a Cold War and military specialist with the Faroese National Archives. 'Greenland and the Faeroes are unique areas in the sense that there is no alternative land area nearby to either place ground forces/bases or from where to keep an eye on the area.'

"The Danish government wants to influence NATO policy and keep its position as a strong U.S. ally, but without the Faeroes and Greenland, Denmark will lose bargaining power and have little to offer." (United Press International, March 2, 2006)

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