



The Fast-Changing Arctic: Rethinking Arctic Security for a Warmer World

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THE FAST-CHANGING ARCTIC: RETHINKING ARCTIC SECURITY FOR A WARMER WORLD. Edited by Barry Scott Zellen. Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2013, 401 pp., \$34.95 CAD, \$41.95 USD (softcover). ISBN 978-1-55238-646-0. Available as a free ePub at <http://uofcpress.com/books/9781552386460>.

THE FAST-CHANGING ARCTIC is more about the geopolitics of the Arctic than the rapidly evolving environmental changes taking place there. However, anyone who does research in the Arctic must be sensitive to the politics at some level and will be interested in policy matters that can be informed by science and ultimately will affect the future state of the Arctic environment.

This book is a collection of 16 substantive chapters arranged under the headings Arctic climate change: strategic challenges and opportunities, Cooperation and conflict: paths forward, Regional perspectives, and Concluding remarks. The 17 authors encompass a range of relevant experience and expertise, and include academics, military and diplomatic professionals, and journalists. None appear to be from indigenous Arctic communities, although several of the chapters deal with emerging indigenous governance and power-sharing issues, particularly in Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. There are extensive notes and references, numerous maps and other figures, a comprehensive index, and information about the contributing authors. Most of the chapters have appeared previously as articles in foreign policy and international law journals dating between 2009 and 2011, but they provide good background to things to come.

Arctic warming and associated diminishing sea ice and other physical and ecological effects are sketched in several chapters, with reference to model projections for future change. That the decline in seasonal sea-ice extent has outpaced most model projections is noted and becomes a source of some urgency, as in Alun Anderson's statement, "action to look after the Arctic must accelerate too." Widening Arctic seaways are being exploited by increased commercial shipping along Russia's long-established Northern Sea Route and by tourist ships in Greenland and

Canadian waters. Exploration for oil and gas is currently taking place in Arctic seas of four of the five countries that border the Arctic Ocean, with Norway already exporting liquefied natural gas from the Barents Sea. Easier access by sea to places with known or suspected mineral deposits is spurring multinational mining interests to plan new developments.

The new rush to the North might be expected to fuel rivalries among the Arctic countries, as well as other states such as China that have become active in the polar regions. We have seen the Russian flag planted on the seabed at the North Pole, declarations by Canadian and American politicians that the Arctic "is ours to use," and, more concretely, attempts to claim jurisdiction beyond current boundaries to the Pole. For some states, the maintenance of a military presence in the region is essential to demonstrate a commitment to protect one's national interests. Most of these actions are symbolic and meant for domestic political purposes. There are few if any intractable causes for conflict between the Arctic states, all of whom realize that cooperation is in everyone's best interest.

Intergovernmental cooperation occurs in the Arctic within the Arctic Council, which is made up of representatives at the ministerial level from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. Circumpolar indigenous groups have permanent participatory recognition in the council, while 12 nonarctic countries and a number of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations have observer status. This forum provides for cooperation and research in matters of common interest, including environmental protection, biodiversity and conservation, climate change, socio-economic issues, shipping, and search and rescue. It is generally accepted that international boundary disputes and claims to seabed resources in extraterritorial Arctic waters can be managed under existing international accords, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

More recent events have reinforced the perception that rapid environmental change is occurring in the Arctic and elsewhere, largely due to fossil fuel combustion. A large body of climate and energy policy experts, including the International Energy Agency, agree that more than two-thirds of proven fossil fuel reserves must remain unused if global temperature rise is to be kept below 2 °C. Paradoxically, efforts to find new deposits in the Arctic are proceeding, though not without setbacks.

Over considerable technical obstacles and opposition from environmental groups, Russia continues to develop its Arctic offshore oil and gas resources, signaling its determination by the arrest in September 2013 of the Greenpeace vessel *Arctic Sunrise* and its team who were demonstrating at Gazprom's oil platform in the Pechora Sea. Shell's drilling program in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas, also facing opposition by environmental groups, has had to be suspended after storm damage to its drilling rig and financial losses elsewhere in its operations. Greenland has approved some exploratory drilling, but the new government, with its cautious approach to resource development, has put a halt to any further issuing of licenses. In Canadian Arctic waters, where much exploration has taken place in the past, large areas are under lease to oil companies that have won some relaxation of environmental restrictions from a government that gives high priority to resource development; but offshore production is not yet occurring.

Meanwhile, the Arctic Council is making progress toward agreeing on marine oil-spill prevention measures and has established research priorities for regional atmospheric pollution

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from methane and black soot and on climate change adaptation, among others. If adequate support for research and monitoring is forthcoming, there can be at least some degree of regional environmental protection. These efforts can be seen as furthering cooperation but also facilitating the exploitation of Arctic resources, including oil and gas. The larger question of whether such development should take place at all seems, at least at the policy level, to have been answered in the affirmative.

THE FAST-CHANGING ARCTIC is a comprehensive treatment of current Arctic policy issues by authors with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. While the book lacks some of the continuity of a focused work by a single author, the editor has succeeded in organizing the various contributions into a coherent whole. This book joins a growing literature on politics, resource development, and environmental issues in the Arctic, and should be of interest to anyone who has an interest in the future of the region.

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