

ARCTIC ENERGY POLICY AND SECURITY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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Abstract

In this article, the author examines the Arctic region in the context of the energy and security policy of the Russian Federation. The author emphasises the factors which currently influence the increasing interest in the Arctic of the countries which claim rights to this region, which are: the US, Canada, Denmark, Norway and the Russian Federation. Among the most important factors indicating the essence of the Arctic, the author points out, inter alia: plenty of energy deposits, which because of the changing climate, are more available, the size of the Arctic area and new transport routes.

The author indicates the possibilities of using the Russian Federation policy regarding the Arctic in order to, among other things, strengthen the country's international position. The author also presents the extent to which claiming the right to exclusive exploitation of mineral resources by the Russian Federation is the real motive of its actions and its intention to totally subordinate the Arctic area. Simultaneously, an attempt is made to answer the question whether the Arctic is likely to be a place of military conflict in the future?

The article also examines the issues related to the legal status of the Russian Federation regarding the Arctic, the political activity of the Russian Federation in this region and the possibility of the Russian Federation exploiting energy resources in the Arctic region.

The article brings together the issues connected with the Russian Federation and its policy in the region of the Arctic Ocean, and also portrays the importance of the Arctic in the changing international security environment.

Keywords: Arctic, energy resources, energy security, international security, Russian Federation, imperialism

Introduction

The Arctic is a region located at the northernmost part of the Earth stretching over 21 mln square kilometers. It includes both land and water areas. Its distinctive feature is the polar climate and permafrost. The central part of the Arctic is the Arctic Ocean, which covers an area of 14.4 million square kilometers. The Arctic Ocean is joined to the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific. The Arctic does not form a homogeneous surface structure, it also has islands within its borders which include: Greenland, Baffin Island, Victoria Island, Ellesmere Island, Novaya Zemlya and Spitsbergen.

The author, who characterises the geographical location of the Arctic, emphasises several significant features, including: the Arctic is twice the size of Europe¹, it possesses many energy resources; and, furthermore, new transport routes and areas for fishing can be created because of global warming. The mentioned features, which identify the analyzed area, enhance the interest in the Arctic from countries claiming the right to it. These countries are: the United States of America, Canada, Denmark, Norway and the Russian Federation.

The purpose of the article is to analyse the Russian security and energy policy regarding the Arctic. It points out the possibilities of the Russian Federation (RF) exploiting this area by in order to, among other things, strengthen its international position. The author also explains the extent to which the Russian Federation claiming the right to exclusiveness in exploiting raw materials is the actual reason of its actions or a plan to make the Arctic dependent. At the same time, there will be an attempt to answer the question if the Arctic might be the place of a military conflict in the future?

The issues discussed in this article pertain to, in order: the legal status of the Russian Federation regarding the Arctic, political activity of the Russian Federation in this region and the possibility of the Russian Federation exploiting energy resources in the area of the Arctic.

1 Europe covers 10,2 square kilometers.

The publication covers issues connected with the Russian Federation and its policy in the region of the Arctic Ocean. The complicated determinants of the other countries concerning their activity in the Arctic, in the author's opinion, should encourage researchers to carry out a profound analysis, especially with reference to the unceasingly changing political reality.

The legal status of the Russian Federation towards the Arctic Region

Currently, the Arctic is regarded as the one of the most important regions in the world. Due to its energy resources and its political conditions, it favours the competition of countries which, by using different methods, intend to incorporate the Arctic into their borders or to possess exclusiveness in carrying out scientific research there. The long-term aim is an extraction of energy resources.

The Arctic does not have any international legal status. The only determinants of its legal status are: the sector theory created in 1925 and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (hereafter the Convention). The first of them was suggested by Canada in 1925 and it refers to the situation in which a country can claim the right to the arctic territories if it shares a border with the country directly². According to this, a state contiguous to the Arctic should have a right to all the lands that are to be found in the waters between a line extending from its eastern extremity north, and another line extending from its western extremity north. All lands between the two lines up to the North Pole should belong to the country whose territory abuts up there.³ (Map 1).

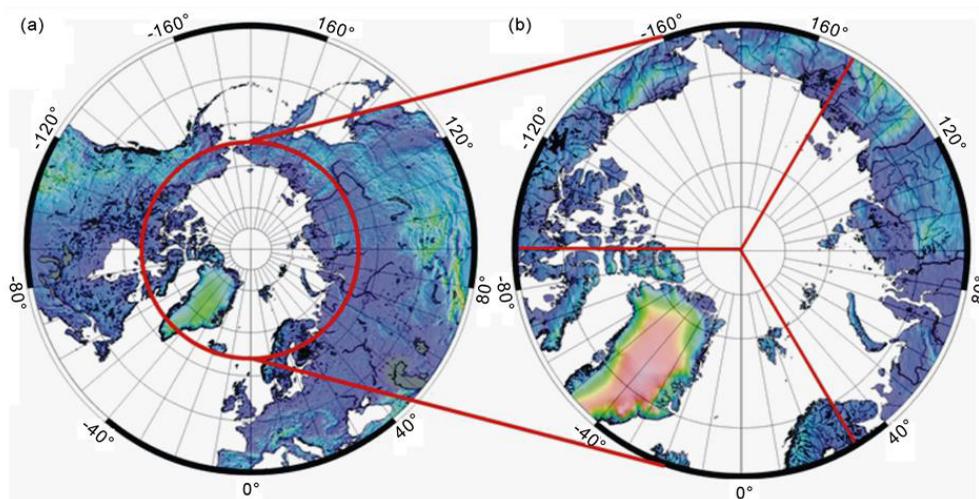
During the Cold War, because of such a record, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic would have been entitled to almost half of the Arctic territories, which could affect its successor - the Russian Federation. However, considering the fact that this record was contractual, it did not constitute the norm of

² A. Głogowska-Balcerzak, *Do kogo będzie należeć biegun? Status prawny Arktyki*, <http://www.stosunki.pl/?q=content/do-kogo-będzie-należeć-biegun-status-prawny-arktyki> [Access:15.03.2016].

³ There.

international law. It became negligible at the moment the rules of the so-called Law of the Sea were introduced.

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 regulates the international law connected with access to the seas. The Arctic Ocean, in accordance with the Convention's provisions, is a high sea which is under freedom of navigation, freedom of overflight, freedom to lay submarine cables and pipelines, freedom to construct artificial islands and other installations permitted under international law, freedom of fishing and freedom of scientific research.⁴ According to these provisions, there is no dominion of any country over the Arctic. Moreover, in accordance with the Convention, it shall be reserved for peaceful purposes⁵.



Source: R. Muskett, *Arctic Diurnal Land-Surface Temperature Range Changes Derived by NASA MODIS-Terra and -Aqua 2000 through 2012*, http://file.scrip.org/Html/10-4700263_44731.htm [Access: 22.03.2016].

Map 1. Regions in the Northern Hemisphere (a), the Arctic (b)

⁴ *Konwencja Narodów Zjednoczonych o prawie morza* sporządzona w Montego Bay dnia 10 grudnia 1982 r. art. 87, <http://www.abc.com.pl/du-akt/-/akt/dz-u-2002-59-543> [Access: 15.03.2016].

⁵ *Konwencja Narodów Zjednoczonych o prawie morza* sporządzona w Montego Bay dnia 10 grudnia 1982 r. art. 88, <http://www.abc.com.pl/du-akt/-/akt/dz-u-2002-59-543> [Access: 15.03.2016].

In view of the provisions of the Convention referring to the high seas, the Arctic countries do not have any reservations resulting in the peaceful nature of their policies. In the author's opinion, the situation may change because of global warming which leads to increasing interest in energy resources located beneath the waters of the Arctic Ocean. In this situation, an issue related to the countries' permissions to exploit resources besides their internal waters and territorial seas arises. The biggest claims regarding "ownership" of the seabed have been made by the Russian Federation. They particularly pertain to the continental shelf⁶ called the Lomonosov Ridge. Pointing out the definition of the continental shelf might be a reason to widen sovereign rights. It should be noted that the Russian Federation has been a party to the Convention on the Law of the Sea since 1997. An attempt to prove the thesis that the „ridge” is a part of Asia, Russia undertook, at the moment of ratification of the Convention, „geological research „Arktika 2007”⁷. However, they have not submitted sufficient proofs to convince the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. In conclusion, Russia has not received the right to extend its exclusive economic zone to 350 nautical miles and, thus, the right to benefit from this area⁸. In spite of this failed attempt, after the „Arktika 2007”, research conducted by the Russian scientific expedition the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment of the Russian Federation made a statement which revealed that analysis of the sediment from the bottom of the North Pole enables the thesis that the Lomonosov Ridge is geologically a part

6 The continental shelf of a coastal state comprises the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea throughout the length of the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured if the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend to that distance, (see) the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Article 76, par 1

7 „Arktika 2007” was an expedition whose aim was to research the seabed in order to substantiate its claim that the Lomonosov Ridge is a continuation of the continental shelf. The expedition led to series of controversies because, during the event, it planted a Russian flag on the seabed at the North Pole. The other countries dismissed the flag planting as purely symbolic and legally meaningless. See M. Rzeszutko-Piotrowska, *Aktywność Federacji Rosyjskiej w regionie Arktyki-wybrane problemy rywalizacji mocarstw*, „Rocznik Bezpieczeństwa” 2014, vol. 8, nr 1, p. 51-62.

8 W. Janicki, *Rywalizacja w Arktyce: przesłanki polityczne czy gospodarcze?*, [w:] „Arktyka na początku XXI wieku. Między współpracą a rywalizacją”, (ed.) M. Łuszczuk, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2013, p. 109.

of the Russian Federation to be confirmed⁹. It brought a strong reaction from the other countries of the Arctic region which, similarly to the Russian Federation, began doing research to prove the right of their claims to the continental shelf. The consequence of these developments was handing over the right to make a decision about the controversial Lomonosov Ridge to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, whose powers are, inter alia, marking out the external borders of the continental shelf¹⁰.

Besides Russia, Canada, the US, Denmark and Norway are the most interested in obtaining exclusiveness of access to the bottom of the Arctic Ocean. In the near future, we will probably witness developments displaying significant involvement of these countries in the Arctic area. The statement of the head of the Danish research group Trine Dahl-Jensen of the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland seems to be a confirmation, (...) *This piece of the ocean will become more accessible for at least another few decades, perhaps never, if global warming does not last long. We do not know anything about the resources located there. But now we have to prove our rights to that territory, because there will not be another occasion*¹¹.

Taking into account the motive which all the Arctic countries are driven by - having the exclusive right of exploitation of the energy resources - it can be admitted that victory in this competition might enable the country to take over all of the potential profits. If it is achieved by the Russian Federation, it seems that because of possessing the Arctic territories it will be able to conduct unilateral policy. Having the sufficient political and economic potential it can, together with the United States, influence developments in this part of the world. Yet, it is believed that the Arctic countries will obey the norms of international law in the competition for access to the energy resources and will not allow military conflict in this area.

⁹ T. Kijewski, *Rywalizacja o surowce energetyczne w Arktyce*, „Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe” 2009, nr 9-10, p. 276.

¹⁰ K. Kubiak, *Interesy i spory państw w Arktyce*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej, Wrocław 2009, p. 178-180.

¹¹ A. Hołdys, *Dania, Kanada i Rosja: Bitwa o Arktykę*, „Gazeta Wyborcza” 06.05.2006, <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114873,3326156.html>, [access: 16.03.2016].

The political activity of the Russian Federation in the Arctic

I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest¹².

Winston Churchill

The Russian Federation, thanks to the Arctic, has a chance to strengthen its international position and also to improve its energy potential because of the petroleum and the natural gas located on the bed of the Arctic Ocean. Furthermore, for the other countries, the crucial fact is the phenomenon of global warming i.e. melting ice caps. According to the estimates of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, they will probably disappear about 2040. This will allow access to the new, faster shipping routes between Europe and Asia, which will expand with two new trade routes: the Northeast Passage (along the northern coastline of Russia) and the Northwest Passage (Map 2). It will facilitate and shorten the route in a significant way for the large container ships which currently cannot pass through the Panama Canal and need to circumnavigate Cape Horn¹³.

In the perspective of such rapid access to the energy resources, thanks to global warming (Map 3), Russia is more and more actively pursuing its policy in the Arctic region. In the author's opinion, it can be characterised in the context of the Russian political system and its authoritarian tendencies; in the circumpolar context and also in the global context, taking into account the Russia's military and economic power. Russia's security policy in the Arctic region cannot be separated from its wider global context.

¹² M.L. Roi, *Russia: The Greatest Arctic Power?*, „Journal of Slavic Military Studies”, Oct-Dec 2010, Vol. 23 Issue 4, p. 552.

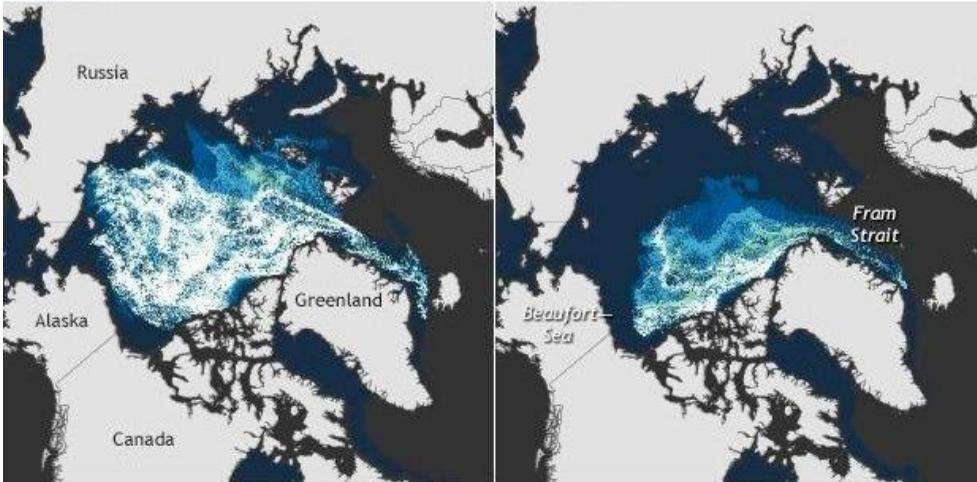
¹³ P. Zaleski, *Arktyka – nowe pole walki o surowce energetyczne*, „Nowa Energia”2014, nr 5-6, p. 1, <http://www.cire.pl/pokaz-pdf-%252Fplik%252F2%252Fartykanowepolewalki.pdf>, [access: 17.03.2016].



The Northwest Passage (green), The Northeast Passage (red) and the future Central Arctic Passage (blue)

Source: E. Stasik, *Kto kontroluje Arktykę, kontroluje świat. Obrady Rady Arktycznej*, <http://www.dw.com/pl/kto-kontroluje-arktykę-kontroluje-świat-obrady-rady-arktycznej/a-16814254>.

Map 2. The Arctic Sea Routes



Source: *Biegun Północny coraz szybciej się topi*, <http://odkrywcy.pl/kat,1038063,title,Biegun-polnocny-coraz-szybciej-sie-topi,wid,16421293,wiadomosc.html> [Access: 17.03.2016].

Map 3. Arctic Sea Ice Extent in March 1988 (left) and in March 2013 (right). The white represents the old ice

Analysing the context of the Russian political system, it is advisable to pay attention to the nature and role of the President in the development of the internal and external policy of the state. Regarding the Arctic, the Russian leaders consider it as the strategically important region for the economic and national development of Russia¹⁴. This is confirmed by Russia's Arctic strategy, approved by President Medvedev on 18 September 2008, entitled *Basics of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period till 2020 and for a further perspective*¹⁵. In this document, the objectives, tasks and strategic priorities of the realisation the Russian Federation policy regarding the Arctic are presented. There are some noteworthy objectives related to the extension of the base which is intended mostly to ensure Russia access to the offshore energy resources. Moreover, the objectives concerning the protection and the defence of the state border which runs in the Russian Arctic zone, including the maintenance of the required potential of the combat troops of general purpose. The strategy has not been amended since its inception. Despite the dynamics of the international environment and its changes, it is still current. Furthermore, regarding the increased interest of the other countries in the Arctic region, the Russian Federation authorities have introduced newer and newer solutions which are essential for the functioning of the analysed area. Thanks to the structural reforms, the administrative body was established to coordinate the activities in the Arctic. What is more, the Arctic Joint Strategic Command "North" was established and some defence tasks were added to the military doctrine amended in 2014¹⁶. Special attention should be paid to the military factor of the Arctic region. The other strategic Russian document regarding the Arctic which is worth mentioning is *The Sea Doctrine of the Russian Federation for the period till 2020*¹⁷. This strategy lists the Arctic Ocean as one of the main operational areas of the Russian Navy, which is the transition into the waters

14 M.L. Roi, *Russia:...* op. cit., p. 558.

15 The author's own translation based on *Основы государственной политики Российской Федерации в Арктике на период до 2020 года и дальнейшую перспективу*, <http://rg.ru/2009/03/30/arktika-osnovy-dok.html> [Access: 17.03.2016].

16 See: *Военная доктрина Российской Федерации*, роз. 32 „Основные задачи Вооруженных Сил, других войск и органов в мирное время”, pkt. y, <http://rg.ru/2014/12/30/doktrina-dok.html> [Access: 17.03.2016].

17 *Морская Доктрина Российской Федерации на период до 2020 года*, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2001/07/58035.shtml> [Access: 17.03.2016].

of the World Ocean¹⁸. As a further matter, the document contains instructions for strengthening the military force stationed in the Extreme North. How much the Russian Federation is concerned with the Arctic is suggested by the number of soldiers allocated in the military bases of The Northern Fleet, which has reached approximately 47 000¹⁹. Besides the initiatives mentioned above, the author, aside from the experts of the National Security Bureau of the Poland Republic, indicates others which evidence the strengthening of the Russian position in the Arctic; they are, inter alia:

- establishment of a new state body (a group of flexible response), responsible for coordinating the activities of ministries and departments, regional authorities and business in the Arctic;
- approval of the state programme *“Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020”* complementing the applicable *“Basics of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period till 2020”* and for a further perspective;
- extensive modernisation work of the Northeast Passage;
- restructuring of the military forces;
- launch of the Regional Environmental Center, whose task will be the ecological monitoring and control of compliance with the law on the protection of nature, both in place of stationing of the fleet and on land, beginning to sort toxic waste dumps, and accession to the construction of recycling plants;
- future research expedition towards the North Pole, the results of which are supposed to be the base for submitting a subsequent application to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf to expand the boundaries of the Russian economic zone²⁰.

The second context of the Russian Federation policy pursued regarding the Arctic has a circumpolar character. The author particularly points out the activity of

18 M. Jarocki, M. Łuszczuk, K. Kubiak, P. Godlewski, *Arktyka jako nowy obszar geopolitycznej rywalizacji państw i mocarstw*, Raport Fundacji „Amicus Europae”, Warszawa 2013, p. 17.

19 See: M. Jarocki, M. Łuszczuk, K. Kubiak, P. Godlewski, *Arktyka jako nowy obszar geopolitycznej rywalizacji państw i mocarstw*, Raport Fundacji „Amicus Europae”, Warszawa 2013, p. 18.

20 See: *Aktywność Rosji w Arktyce*, Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego, <https://www.bbn.gov.pl/pl/prace-biura/publikacje/analizy-raporty-i-nota/6393,NOTATKA-BBN-Aktywnosc-Rosji-w-Arktyce.html?search=9271> [Access: 17.03.2016].

the Arctic Council. The idea of setting up the council arose in the 80s in Canada. One of the goals formulated by the United States was to promote the mutual benefits of international cooperation in the Arctic²¹. The cooperation ended with the creation of the Arctic Council in 1996, which brings together eight permanent members (besides Denmark, Canada, the US, the Russian Federation and Norway, its members also include: Finland, Sweden and Iceland). The main aim of the Arctic Council is to work on emerging issues in the area of the Arctic, which include, among others, climate change in the region linked to global warming and its consequences. To do this, the council uses a wide variety of methods including: political statements, recommendations and best practices²².

The Russian Federation pursues an active and constructive policy in the Arctic Council. Furthermore, the council is a forum for the Russian Federation to have bilateral conversations with each of the other states-members²³. The essential document in the Arctic Council is the Ilulissat Declaration published on 28 May 2008. Torbjörn Pedersen from a Norwegian university in Tromsø claims that it is really noteworthy, because it states, inter alia, the exclusiveness of rights for the coastal countries to exploit the natural resources, and also emphasises resolving issues under the international law of the sea²⁴. The declaration enables the Russians to block the access of the other countries to the Arctic resources. It becomes especially important for the growing interest in the region of China, Japan and the European Union.

Characterising the global context of the Russian Arctic policy, it is worth following the lead of the National Security Bureau analysts to put forward a thesis. It is possible that Russia's intention is to gather such a large military force in the area of the Arctic to annex the land to which it claims the right. This would entail adverse strategic consequences for the Arctic states and their allies in NATO.

²¹ T. Pedersen, *Debates over the Role of the Arctic Council*, „Ocean Development & International Law” 2012, Vol. 43 Is. 2, p. 147.

²² E.J. Molenaar, *Current and Prospective Roles of the Arctic Council System within the Context of the Law of the Sea*, „International Journal of Marine & Coastal Law”, Sep. 2012, Vol. 27 Issue 4, p. 570.

²³ M. Jarocki, *Polityka Federacji Rosyjskiej wobec Arktyki*, <http://www.psz.pl/117-polityka/polityka-federacji-rosyjskiej-wobec-arktyki> [Access: 18.03.2016].

²⁴ See: T. Pedersen, *Debates over the Role of the Arctic Council*, „Ocean Development & International Law” 2012, Vol. 43 Is. 2, p.149-151.

The consequence of such a situation would be the consent to Russia's freedom of action in the Arctic region or the necessity of NATO countries intervening militarily²⁵. In consideration of these developments, it might be assumed that the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 was a test of the international reaction to Russia's actions in breaking international law.

Referring to the Russian analysts' thesis, the US also claims the rights to the energy resources located on the seabed of the Arctic Ocean. In response to the Russian military activity in the North, the Pentagon has extended the systems of operations and air defence to fight against Russian strategic aviation²⁶. Moreover, in 2014, the Americans compiled a road map „Arctic Navy 2014–2030” which indicates the possibility of a military conflict in the Arctic. A year earlier, President Barack Obama approved *the National Strategy for the Arctic*, which emphasises strengthening the national security in this region and also the defense infrastructure²⁷. By 2020, American soldiers are supposed to be prepared for hostilities in the Arctic. In the Russian analysts' opinion, Russia's activities are the consequence of the steps taken by the US. What is more, they contend that concern about national security justifies the defensive efforts of their country taking place in the Arctic.

With regard to the examples above of different perceptions of the Arctic environment, both the United States and the Russian Federation strive to achieve hegemonic position in this strategic region of the world. However, it is noteworthy that the US has by its side the other Arctic countries which are members of NATO. Perhaps this argument is currently the crucial one for the preservation of peace at the North Pole. However, future military intervention in the Arctic cannot be excluded because of the importance of this region for Russia's interests. Therefore, Russia can use force like it did in Georgia in 2008 or six years later in Ukraine.

25 T. Pedersen, *Debates over the Role of the Arctic Council*, „Ocean Development & International Law” 2012, Vol. 43 Is. 2, p. 149-151.

26 А. Хроленко, *США и Россия в Арктике: напряжение растет*, <http://ria.ru/analytics/20151023/1306967014.html>, [access: 17. 03. 2016].

27 А. Хроленко, *США и Россия в Арктике: напряжение растет*, <http://ria.ru/analytics/20151023/1306967014.html>, [access: 17. 03. 2016].

Another argument is the importance of the Arctic and its natural resources which are the main income source for Russia²⁸.

Thanks to the previous activity of Russia in the Arctic Council, it is believed that it will further intensify its activities in the field of environmental protection of the Arctic as well as spend considerable sums of money for this purpose. This can increase its importance as a trusted member of the council as well as strengthen its position in negotiations related to the Arctic issue. Taking into account the overall Russian policy in the Arctic region, it will probably not have a conflictual character. The previous actions of the Russian Federation rather indicate a peaceful way of regulating issues connected with its presence in the Arctic. So far, Russia has followed the international law norms and has proved its rights regarding its position at the North Pole by doing scientific research.

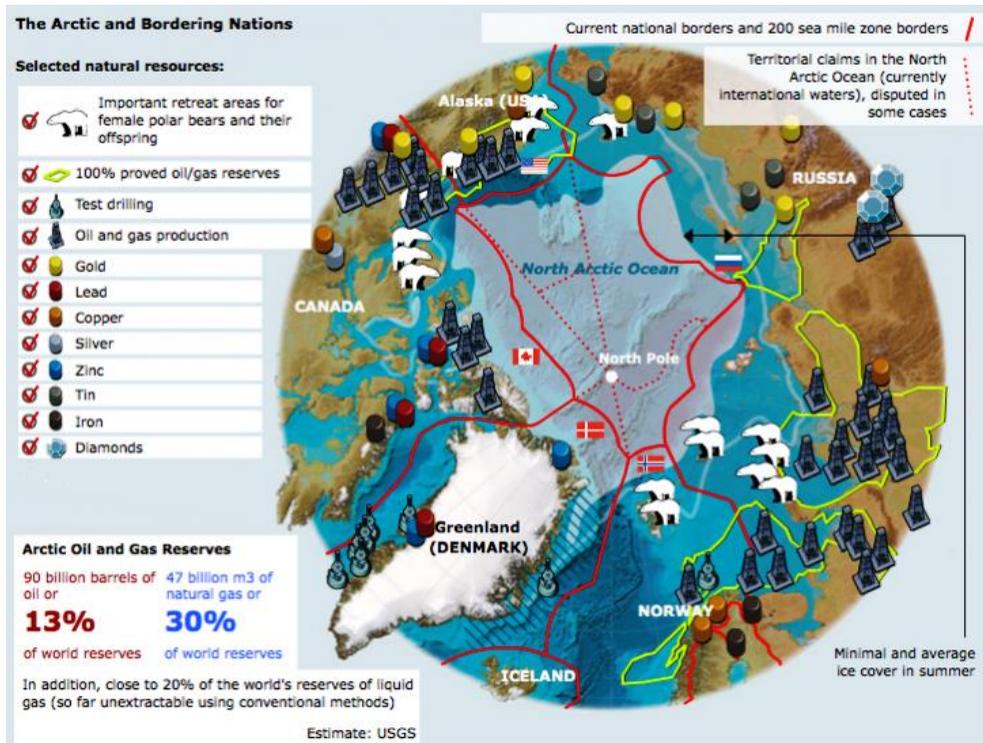
The possibilities of the Russian Federation exploiting the energy resources in the Arctic

The Arctic is a region rich in significant deposits of energy resources - oil and natural gas reserves and rich deposits of rare and valuable minerals: zinc, manganese, lead, platinum, diamonds and gold. A scientific agency of the United States government, the US Geological Survey in 2008, estimated that deposits of natural gas of 46 quintillion meters cubed (almost 30 percent of undiscovered gas in the world) and 90 million barrels of oil (approx. 13 percent of undiscovered reserves in the world)²⁹ (Map 4) might be located in the Arctic region. In the face of such rich deposits, the Russian Federation has intensified its political and military

²⁸ M. L. Roi, *Russia: The Greatest Arctic Power?*, „Journal of Slavic Military Studies”, Oct-Dec 2010, Vol. 23 Iss. 4, p. 561.

²⁹ *90 Billion Barrels of Oil and 1,670 Trillion Cubic Feet of Natural Gas Assessed in the Arctic*, United States Geological Survey, 23 lipca 2008 r., http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=1980&from=rss_home#.Vuv5tbxFP0h, [dostęp: 18.03.2016 r.].

activity in the Arctic region. This is also confirmed by the words of President Vladimir Putin who said on television *Rosija: The Arctic has been and will be part of Russia and it does not foresee putting it under international control*³⁰.



Source: *What raw materials can be derived from the Arctic?*, <http://en.expedition-hope.org/blog/what-raw-materials-can-be-derived-from-the-arctic/>

Map 4. Distribution of energy resources and minerals in the Arctic region

In the coming years, as the glaciers proceed to melt, the interest of international energy companies involved in the exploitation of deposits near the North Pole will increase³¹. However, in the author's opinion, the political and economic benefits primarily affect the pace of extraction and they will be the driver of the exploitation of energy resources in the Arctic area. Moreover, considering that Russia is economically dependent on the export of petroleum and natural gas, the

³⁰ *Rosja stawia na Arktykę*, <http://biznes.pl/magazyny/energetyka/rosja-stawia-na-arktyke/98jyl> [Access: 18.03.2016].

³¹ T. Kijewski, op. cit. p. 284.

possibility of instant reaching „its” deposits in the Arctic will allow the country to significantly improve its current poor economic situation caused by, inter alia: economic and political pressure from the West. Interestingly, the sanctions also hit US companies, for example ExxonMobil, which carries out common projects with the Russian Rosneft, who lost approximately 1 billion USD by the end of 2014³². The US concern does not plan to give up the cooperation with Rosneft. In the current political situation, the cooperation of US companies with Russian ones is essential for the Russian Federation pursuing an effective Arctic policy. This is mostly related to the use of American technologies for the exploitation of offshore deposits which the Russians do not have at their disposition. However, Moscow does not remain passive and is actively developing a programme to implement new procedures and technologies. For instance, Gazprom received two modern oil rigs to extract deposits in the Barents Sea and the experience gained will be useful for building new platforms in the Arctic Ocean.

The increasing possibilities of Russia extracting energy resources in the Arctic region could disturb the European countries. In the author’s opinion, a few factors indicate this. The new sea routes will arise as a result of global warming. Therefore, the Russian Federation will gain an opportunity to use new routes to export oil and natural gas from Siberia to West Europe and China. Thanks to this, there is a possibility to limit the transit of these resources by pipeline system of the countries of West and East Europe. This is connected with the eventual weakening of these countries’ position in the negotiations with Russia as well as the lower level of European energy security. Furthermore, Russia is carrying out a plan of implementation for the fleet’s modern icebreakers (three nuclear-powered and four traditional) which are supposed to facilitate the transport of oil by the tankers, which significantly accelerates their distribution to the customers³³.

In the opinion of many in Poland and the west, the extraction of oil and natural gas is unprofitable for Russia in the current international situation. Additionally, they claim that because of the development of transport, the petroleum will be marginalised by the other raw materials which are more efficient and cheaper. But, due to the slow development of technology which would allow raw material

32 М. Золотова, *Арктике нет альтернативы*, <http://www.odnako.org/almanac/material/arktike-net-alternativi/> [Access: 18.03.2016].

33 М. Jarocki, op. cit.

to be produced that replaces oil and natural gas, it can be assumed that the existing traditional energy resources will still be discovered and exploited. Russia is not intensifying its military force at the North Pole by accident, simultaneously building a modern fleet and investing in extraction technologies.

Assessing the possibilities of the Russian Federation exploiting energy resources in the Arctic area, it can be contended that they do not allow the full use of existing deposits on the seabed of the Arctic Ocean at this time. The factors influencing this situation, among others, are: considerable depth of the submarine areas on both sides of the Lomonosov Ridge reaching 3000 metres (precludes boreholes), thickness of the ice cap which, despite melting, is still an obstacle, high costs of extraction (unprofitability), lack of modern technologies of exploitation of deposits and cooperation of the Russian concerns with the American ones which are more technologically advanced.

Following these observations, in the author's opinion, the Arctic area has a crucial role in the current international reality. It might be acknowledged that because of the resources in the Arctic, in the perspective of the next few decades, this area will become an epicentre of the energy policy activities of the five states claiming the right to it. In addition, it is noteworthy that the Arctic does not have fully defined legal status and which allows it to become a subject of international relations and competition. Above all, it should be emphasised that the countries with the highest political and economic potential, which include the United States and the Russian Federation, will have the greatest impact on the Arctic. Because of the Arctic Council, they will probably attempt to limit the influence of other countries and to solve the issue related to claiming the rights to this region. Therefore, a military led competition for energy resources located in the Arctic cannot be excluded. However, currently, while the Russian Federation is not able to independently extract deposits, it will pursue a peaceful policy proving its rights to the Arctic area through subsequent expeditions. In this case, incidents similar to the one from 2007, when a Russian flag was planted on the seabed at the North Pole, can serve as a symbol of Russian imperial ambitions.

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