

Kraska, James, ed. 2011. *Arctic Security in an Age of Climate Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 340 pages. ISBN: 9781107006607

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The cold waters of the Arctic have *en passant* turned into a new hot spot of international politics and security studies. Due to the rapid thaw of a once 'frozen dessert' in the wake of global warming that is felt in high latitudes by far earlier and much more severely than elsewhere on the globe, new and shortened international maritime trade routes, migrating fish stocks, fresh water resources, rare earths and above all vast oil and gas repositories are to become accessible in the circumpolar North. On the downside, environmental degradation and rising human activity cause vulnerable ecosystems and well adapted indigenous communities to totter. Patterns of state behaviour to foster pan-Arctic cooperative governance arrangements are pivotal elements in a changing North and will inevitably shape its future as well as the people who call it their *home*.

Much has already been written on the region's geostrategic importance particularly to each of the *Arctic Eight* (Canada, Norway, Denmark/Greenland, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Russia and the US). With respect to energy resources anticipated under the receding Arctic ice-cover, which has until last served as an impenetrable physical barrier, most of these states seek to extend their 200 nautical miles exclusive economic zone – determined by the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea – with the result that several territorial claims overlap. Having said this, the policy implications of this new era of Arctic affairs have

rarely been analysed in a systematic manner as related to shared security issues arising in a 'common' Arctic.

The present miscellany is the result of a conference held at the U.S. Naval War College in September 2009. Edited by U.S. Navy Commander James Kraska, this book for the first time compares state perceptions and relevant security aspects to address the everlasting question of whether cooperation or conflict is to prevail in the High North. To this end, an 'indirect approach' to Arctic security is introduced in the first section and then applied to the European Arctic (including Russia) in Part II and the North American Arctic in Part III of the book. This geographical divide is, however, of minor analytical importance and probably made to better structure the two empirical sections.

The 'indirect approach' used in the book comprehends security as a political end, which is most likely to be reached through multilateral collaboration each individual actor commits to. In his introductory chapter, Franklyn Griffiths pleads in favour of an isolationist – internationalist dichotomy of Arctic affairs, distinguishing between exclusive state sovereignty over national waters and integrative regional stewardship over common waters beyond domestic territories. How closely both spheres are inter-related is best exemplified in two subsequent policy-based chapters on marine affairs with a special focus on rising shipping activity. They put Arctic trans-

formations into a global(ised) perspective against the backdrop of economic interdependencies on the world market, but at the same time illuminate socio-ecological feedback mechanisms of Arctic melting processes.

Methodologically, the theoretical scheme is similarly applied to seven case studies dealt with in this volume (Sweden being the one Arctic state just mentioned briefly). Norway, Russia, Denmark/Greenland, Canada and the US are covered in two chapters each. While the first one generally sets out security and governance challenges these states face in a changing environment, the other one analyses accompanying responsive action and strategic behaviour in Arctic diplomacy. Finland and Iceland, in contrast, were assigned less space in the book.

As promising as the theoretical approach may sound in the first place, the empirical sections turn out to cling too much to the isolationist perspective and to remain low on the internationalist one. By adopting a state-centric view, the chapters mostly focus on economic interests, national sovereignty, smouldering border disputes or looming remilitarisation moves in Arctic waters to secure individual claims. Russia is unanimously identified as *the* Arctic superpower, which holds, as Griffiths writes, 'the future of Arctic international relations very largely in its hands' (p.3). This view dovetails nicely with the description of Russia as a regional hegemon that is in each case

study referred to as a still unreliable partner, if not a risk to transpolar stability and security in itself. Yet, this interpretation first disregards the strong multipolar character of Arctic governance and second fairly contradicts collaborative action in current intergovernmental affairs as well as Moscow's reiterative affirmation to international cooperation. Hence, this notion should have been reflected with more depth.

Also, important internationalist and 'soft security' dimensions such as environmental, socioeconomic or human security as both possible sources of conflict and desired policy outcomes should have been spotlighted more firmly. Unfortunately, a final symbiosis comparatively pondering on the empirical findings or daring a careful future development analysis is missing at all. Instead, the book closes for some inexplicable reason with a nevertheless interesting afterword outlining the United Kingdom's geo-strategic position in the North Atlantic and its awakened interests therein.

Summing up, the book represents a seasonable and profound compendium on Arctic security concerns and respective foreign policy strategies, albeit with an analytically narrowed focus on state-level policies. For advanced students of international relations, area studies and security studies, however, it marks a new climax of Arctic affairs research and whets interest for future developments in a new age of High North politics.

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