

# Security & military cooperation in the Barents region

*Norway and Russia at the  
forefront in the High North*

**Florian Vidal**  
**PhD Candidate - IPSE Research**  
**Fellow**  
**Paris Descartes University**



# Barents as a geographical challenge



# Security priorities

- \* Cooperation and NOT confrontation
- \* Mitigate hostile conditions (climate, environment)
- \* Optimized use of the widely dispersed scarce resources
- \* Provide assistance faster and more directly

In order to:

- \* Organize rescue operations
- \* Answer to natural disasters
- \* Coordinate special forces intervention (terrorism, piracy)

# Russian military presence



**Russian Navy's Northern Fleet**  
(photo: 200th Motorized Infantry Brigade)

**Joint-military exercises -  
air drills** (photo: Illyushin  
Il-38)



# Pomor as a symbol

- \* Since 1994, Norway and Russia lead regular joint exercises
- \* Exercise interoperability between Norwegian and Russian naval and air forces
- \* Objectives: counter terrorism, counter piracy, rescue operations and joint responses to environmental disasters
- \* Pomor 2013: Barents and Norwegian seas (10-16 May)

# Cold Response - March 2014



103 000 kilometers is the total length of the norwegian coastline including fjords and islands. That is nearly three times around the world.



# Boomerang effect of the Ukrainian crisis

- \* Norwegian alignment to other Western countries
- \* Symbolic sanctions on the EU paths
- \* Suspension of bilateral military cooperation until further notice
- \* Splitting in the Norwegian stance: Oslo vs. Northern regions
- \* Non-military related cooperation still underway
- \* Maintaining cooperation and information sharing in matters of the environment, shipping, and economic activities

# NATO as supporting role



## NATO-RUSSIA COUNCIL

Statement by NATO Foreign Ministers  
April, 01 2014

...We have decided to suspend all practical civilian and military cooperation between NATO and Russia. Our political dialogue in the NATO-Russia Council can continue, as necessary, at the Ambassadorial level and above, to allow us to exchange views, first and foremost on this crisis. We will review NATO's relations with Russia at our next meeting in June...



**Jens Stoltenberg**  
**Next NATO General Secretary**

# Militarization of oil & gas companies?

- \* Федеральный закон Российской Федерации от 20 апреля 2014 г. N 75-ФЗ
- \* Putin signs amendments in a federal law on the protection of oil and gas objects and infrastructure
- \* The Russian oil companies will from now on be entitled to establish their own protection units
- \* Privatization of the Barents security?

# Main observations

- \* Russia & Norway as long-term partners
- \* Negative geopolitical context
- \* NATO: a player of second rank in the Barents region
- \* As Arctic is rapidly shifting, military cooperation asks continuous feedbacks and anticipation regarding potential threats

# Thank you for your attention!



Contact: [florian.vidal@gmail.com](mailto:florian.vidal@gmail.com)