

# The Impact of NATO Enlargement on Russian Security in the Baltic and Arctic

Ferdi GÜÇYETMEZ<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

After the discovery of energy and new transit routes, the Arctic has become the new competition area of global powers. The Arctic, which has a geopolitically important position, is the new struggle area of NATO and Russia. When we examine the region we see the members of the Arctic Council are Canada, America, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Sweden and Russia. All of these countries are NATO members except Russia and Sweden. After Russia's attack on Ukraine, Finland and Sweden applied for NATO membership and Finland was accepted. On the other hand, with the Baltic states also becoming NATO members, Russia is surrounded both in Eastern Europe and in the Arctic region. Therefore, the study seeks to answer three main research questions: first, how is NATO's enlargement process in the Arctic region progressing? Second, what is Russia's doctrine (policies) against NATO enlargement? Third, what will be the impact of NATO enlargement on Russia's security?

*Key Words:* Arctic, NATO, Russia, Arctic Council, Hegemony

## Baltık ve Arktika'da NATO Geniřlemesinin Rusya Güvenliđine Etkisi

### Öz

Arktika, enerji ve yeni geçiř yollarının keřfedilmesi sonrasında küresel güçlerin yeni rekabet alanı olmuřtur. Jeopolitik olarak önemli bir konuma sahip olan Arktika, NATO ve Rusya'nın yeni mücadele alanıdır. Bölgeyi incelediđimizde, Arktika Konseyi üyeleri Kanada, Amerika, Norveç, Danimarka, İzlanda, Finlandiya, İsveç ve Rusya'dır. Bu ülkelerden Rusya ve İsveç haricinde hepsi NATO üyesidir. Rusya'nın Ukrayna'ya saldırmasının ardından Finlandiya ve İsveç NATO üyesi olmak için bařvuru yapmıřlardır ve Finlandiya NATO üyeliđine kabul edilmiřtir. Diđer yandan Baltık ülkelerinin de NATO üyesi olması ile Rusya hem Dođu Avrupa hem de Arktika bölgesinde çevrelenmiř durumdadır. Bu nedenle, çalıřma kapsamında üç temel arařtırma sorusuna cevap aranmaktadır: birincisi, NATO'nun Arktika bölgesindeki geniřleme süreci nasıl ilerlemektedir? İkinçisi, NATO geniřlemesine karřı Rusya'nın doktrini (politikaları) nedir? Üçüncüsü, NATO geniřlemesinin Rusya'nın güvenliđine etkisi nasıl olacaktır?

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Arktika, NATO, Rusya, Arktik Konseyi, Hegemonya


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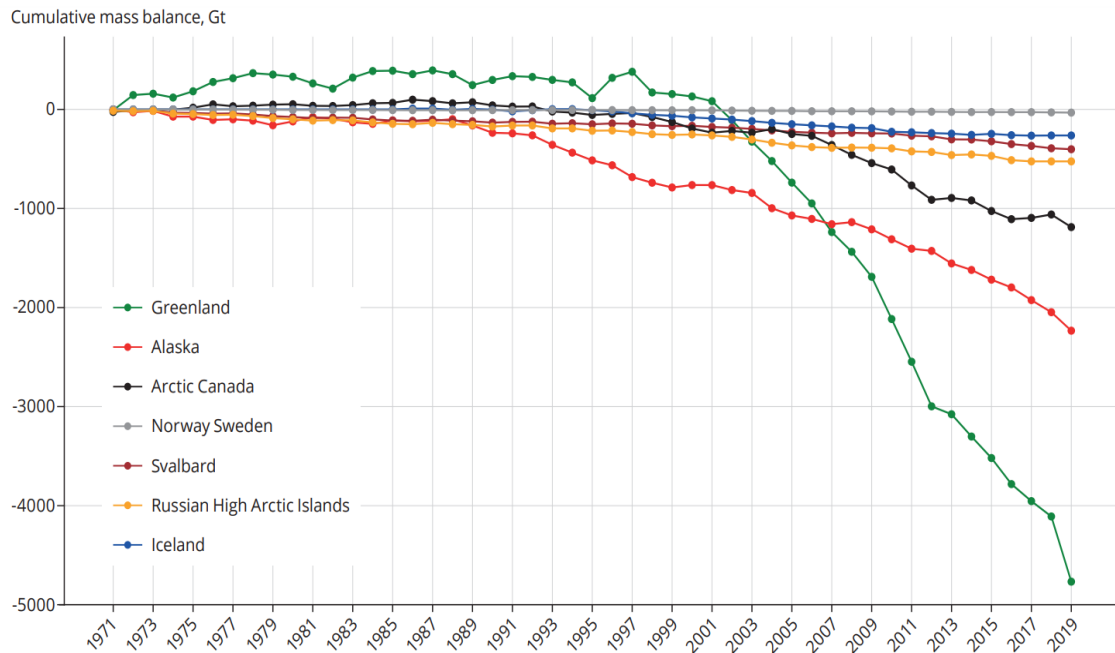
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## Introduction

There are many internal and external factors that affect hegemony behaviors in the Arctic region. The first of these is climate change. We can say that climate change is reshaping international security and regional governance. These changes require different approaches regionally and open up a more specialized space for the Arctic. Melting ice as a result of climate change provides greater access to energy and marine resources. Scientific studies in the Arctic region predict a temperature increase of 4 to 7 degrees Celsius by the end of this century (Stokke, 2011, pp. 844–845). Moreover, according to the data put forward by scientists, the global temperature in the Arctic region is increasing 4 times faster than in other regions. Climate scientists predict an ice-covered Arctic Ocean by the summer of 2040 (Pikok, 2022). When we look at the entire Arctic region, there is a general melting. When we look at the entire Arctic region, we see a general melting. When we examine Figure I, we see that the highest melting trend is in Greenland. Starting in 1997, this negative trend continues until 2019. This trend is followed by Alaska and Canada. The least melting trend is observed in Norway and Sweden. This situation will bring many new opportunities as well as many challenges. Between 1997 and 2019, scientific analyses indicate 49% ice melt in the entire region. 33% of this is in the western Arctic region. The trend of melting and thinning glaciers is increasing every year.



**Figure I:** Ice Loss in the Arctic Region (Arctic Council, 2021).

The second factor affecting hegemonic behavior in the Arctic region is the new energy fields. According to geological studies conducted by the US in the Arctic, the region harbors significant oil and natural gas reserves (Annika, 2018, pp. 95-107). The melting of the ice will facilitate the discovery of these resources. Geological and energy engineers agree that international energy reserves will run out after 2050 and emphasize the need to increase renewable energy sources. However, we need a long time for the transformation of energy and the technology to have long-lasting energy. As gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean continue to be discussed, new debates will also emerge for the Arctic region. Because according to studies conducted in the Arctic region, there is 44 times more energy than in the Eastern Mediterranean. According to research conducted by Circum-Arctic, the Arctic region has 22% of the world's gas reserves. It also holds 13% of the world's undiscovered oil. This amounts to 90 billion barrels of oil and 1,670 trillion cubic feet of natural gas (The U.S. Geological Survey, 2008). Russia and Norway have 72% of the region's Arctic gas resources. The US, Canada and Greenland have 28% (Toker, 2014, p.30). However, more than 80% of these energy lines are still under glaciers. On the other hand, it is known that Russia, which has the longest coast in the Arctic region, has the highest share in this energy. Disagreements between the US and Russia on international law regarding energy sharing continue (Vsevolod, 2008, pp. 261-271).

The third factor affecting hegemonic behavior in the Arctic is the new polar routes created by melting ice caps. The melting of the Arctic ice will provide access to new shipping routes that shorten the

trade routes between Europe and East Asia. In this regard, China has mutual agreements with both Russia and European states (Gang, 2012, pp. 358-371). China's use of this route within the scope of the 'Northern Silk Road' project will significantly affect world trade (Gao, 2020, pp. 353-374). More than 80% of world trade takes place by sea (Annika, 2018, pp. 95-107). China is a country that conducts maritime transportation professionally. In the Arctic, icebreakers jointly produced by China and Russia open new routes for merchant ships (Nong, 2014, pp. 271-286). Chinese merchant ships that reach Eastern Europe and the interior of Europe in a shorter time are perceived as a threat to America (Peng & Njord, 2015, pp. 233-249). The reason why they are perceived as a threat is China's intention to increase its commercial interdependence with European states.

Considering the above-mentioned issues, the melting ice sheet increases the geopolitical and geoeconomic importance of the region, while worsening its ecological fragility. This situation threatens the traditional way of life of the indigenous people and increases the potential for conflict in the region. The melting of Arctic glaciers and the consequent rise in sea levels will have ecological, economic and security implications (Caymaz, E., Büyüksağnak, Y. B. & Özsoy, B., 2021, p. 39). In addition to the five Arctic states (A5) (US, Canada, Russia, Norway (Greenland) and Denmark), the European Union (EU) and NATO are closely related to the Arctic region. Arctic Commissioners Piebalgs and Borg stressed the need to utilize the natural resources of the Arctic region. EU High Representative Javier Solana talked about the importance of the Arctic in his latest report on climate change and international security. When the strategic resources of the region are combined with the interests of the Arctic actors, it creates a new hegemony area (Güçyetmez, 2021).

### **Russia's Arctic Policy and New Routes**

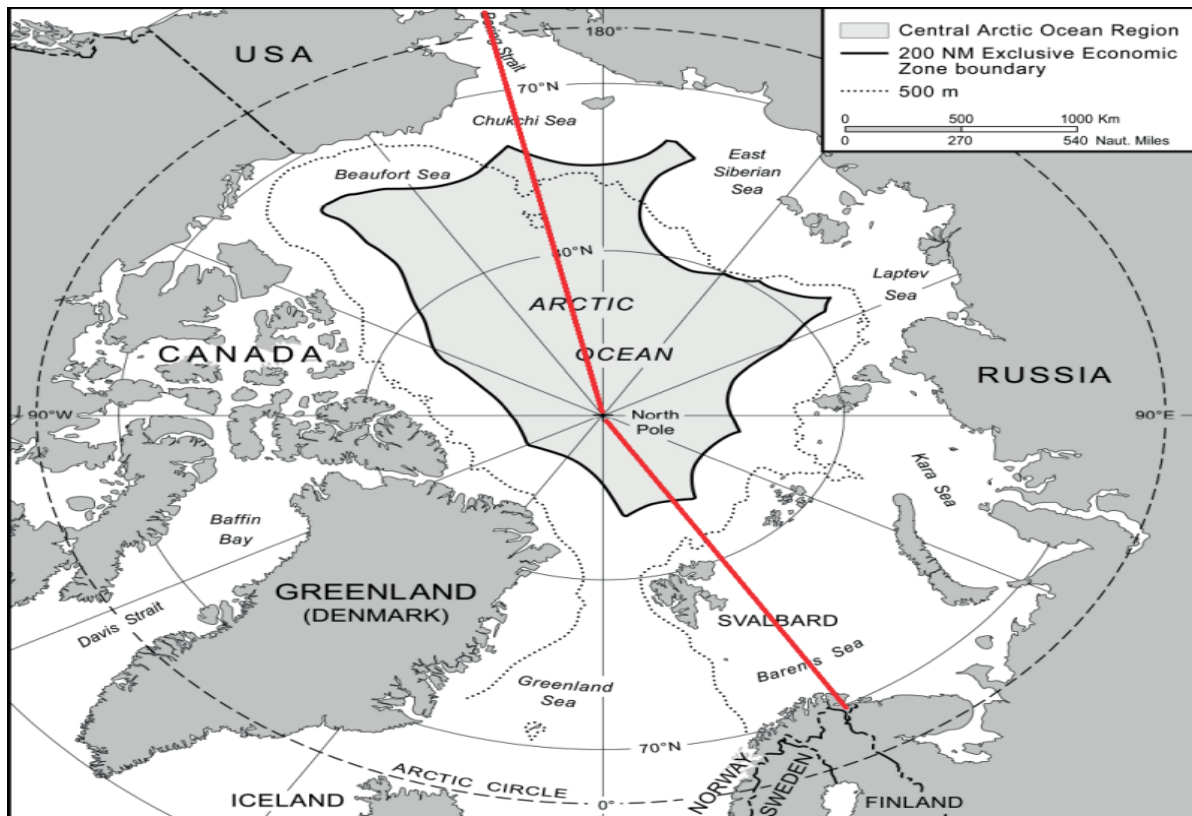
In the 15th century, European explorers sought new sea routes in the Arctic. Three routes were identified in this region: A Northwest Passage through the northern archipelago of the North American continent; a Northeast Passage following the northern coastline of the Eurasian landmass; and a Trans-Arctic Route across the Arctic Ocean (Spufford, 1996).

Although work on the Trans-Arctic Route and the Northwest Passage had almost ceased in the 20th century, the Northeast Passage was a very important issue for the Soviet Union. Soviet planners believed that by developing the Northern Sea Route, the Soviet Union would have the shortest route between the North Atlantic and the North Pacific and gain a significant strategic advantage. Soviet control of this route would also enable the unrestricted transfer of economic resources across its vast territory. This would not only serve as a bridge between Europe and Asia for the Soviets, but would also give them an advantage over rival countries.

*The Northern Sea Route (NSR) runs along the Russian Arctic coast. It is the first sea route likely to be ice-free and thus represents the highest commercial potential (Sharp, 2011, p.314). The importance of the Arctic thus becomes even more apparent. With the strategic moves made by the Kremlin, Yamal was able to deliver its LNG cargo to Asia in a shorter time via this route. Thanks to the LNG cargo reaching Asia in a shorter time, costs have decreased, and the importance of the Arctic for Asia has increased. It reduces the sea journey between East Asia and Western Europe using the Suez Canal from 21,000 km to 12,800 km, reducing transit time by 10-15 days. Furthermore, during the Soviet era, the NSR was used for military and resource benefit throughout the Soviet Arctic. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, interest in it declined, but interest and traffic increased again in the late 2000s. In 2009, two German ships, the Beluga Fraternity, and the Beluga Foresight, sailing with a Russian icebreaker, completed the first commercial voyage along the Northern Sea Route (or Northeast Passage), connecting Busan to Rotterdam with several stops. The Kremlin wants to further increase traffic on this route by 2030. According to published reports, the initial goal is to reach 80 million tons of transit traffic (Skripnuk, Iliyushchenko, Kulik and Stepanova, 2020, p. 2). Current transit traffic is around 40 million tons. This is almost twice the traffic flow target. It should be added that this route will also save merchant ships from piracy. As transit traffic has increased, the Kremlin has had to increase military modernization. Troops in the Arctic have also been modernized to respond to any American attack on the region. Military activities there are seen as Russia's national security (Titley and Courtney, 2010, pp. 35-48).*

Russia owns 60% of the coasts in the Arctic region. Russia, which has the largest coastline, also has the most natural resources. 70% of the energy resources in the Arctic region are located off the Russian coast. Russia is aware of its strategic position and therefore has established special units for the Arctic. Russia has published a doctrine on the Arctic and has shown that it has increased its interest in the region. When we analyze this doctrine, we see that Russia is advancing its state policies in the Arctic. The doctrine includes Russia's state policies, goals for the region, strategic priorities, socio-economic development

plans, ensuring national security, ensuring rights arising from international law, ensuring coastal security and general development goals (Arctic Portal, 2010).



**Figure 1:** Arctic Claims of the Soviet Union (Lawson, 2014).

Arctic policies, which slowed down with the end of the Cold War, resumed after the 2000s. Russia applied to the United Nations (UN) in 2001, claiming that the Mendeleev and Lomonosov region was connected to the Arctic. After the UN's rejection, scientific studies were started in the region in 2007 and the application was made again in 2015, but without positive results. Russia's planting of the Russian flag in the Arctic depths is another important event of the 2007 period (Ekaterine, 2010, pp. 851-864).

Increasing its efforts both diplomatically and scientifically, Russia has created a strategy pathway titled "National Security and Strategy" to prove its claims about the Arctic. This strategy pathway was supported by the state ministry in 2014 and opportunities were offered to scientists. A law was also passed in 2014 to support this strategy and the Arctic region was added to Russia's security laws. The then Minister of Defense, General Arkady Bahin, took part in the strategic plan. Russia has positively increased its approaches to the Arctic region, both scientifically and politically, and in 2015 established the Arctic Development Commission. This commission includes military, government officials and academics. Taking its Arctic projection even further, Russia created a 10-year Arctic development plan and laid out its Arctic vision to be realized by 2025. Later, with the planning led by Vladimir Putin, a separate chapter on energy and transit routes was opened and the 2035 vision was determined.

According to Russia's 2035 vision, the Arctic region is desired to be used as a geostrategic area. In this region, a policy has been established on both energy resources and transit routes. It wants to act as a bridge between Asia and Europe through transit routes. With China using the Northern Gateway to reach the European market, the dynamics of the region will further increase (Güçyetmez, 2021, pp. 29-41). Moreover, the Kremlin was aware of the energy diversity in the region and planned its strategic move accordingly. Russia has a total of 40 advanced ships and maintains its dominance in the Arctic with 8 nuclear icebreakers. Russia, whose 2035 perspective is based on maritime dominance, continues to build new icebreakers to increase this dominance. With its naval dominance, the Kremlin has managed to overcome the harsh winter conditions of the Arctic. But more importantly, it has also dominated other countries bordering the Arctic. The Northwest Passage is strategically important, but it can also leave Russia vulnerable to external factors. It has to be dominant against the naval forces of the Baltic states, the Gulf of Finland and Denmark.

## **Russia's New Security Doctrine Against NATO Enlargement**

As a result of the integration of the countries in the Baltic Sea and the Arctic Ocean into NATO, Russia has taken a new precaution. The basis for this decision is the sustainable socio-economic development of the Russian Federation. In addition, there are activities aimed at the exploration, development, utilization and protection of world ocean resources and areas, as well as national security. According to the doctrine, protecting national interests in the world ocean is one of the highest priorities of states.

NATO enlargement is a threat to Russia. Therefore, new precautionary packages for military expenditures and military equipment are a necessity. Accordingly, Russia published a new naval doctrine on July 31, 2022. In this doctrine, a very large area was given for the Arctic Sea (Kremlin, <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48215/page/3>).

The doctrine lists the main challenges and threats to Russia's national security and sustainable development in Article 22 as follows:

1. Limiting access by the United States and its allies to world ocean resources and vital shipping communications;
2. NATO's recognition of the borders of the Russian Federation. Increase in the number of exercises in the seas of the Russian Federation;
3. The desire to achieve the supremacy of the US naval forces and to achieve the combat capabilities of the navies of other states;
4. Increasing the military control of the Russian Federation over the Northern Sea Route, eliminating the presence of foreign navies in the Arctic;
5. Distancing the attempts of several states in the Arctic to achieve their geopolitical goals;

Russia also referred to the UN Maritime Convention in its naval doctrine. In Article 28 of the doctrine; "According to Article 76 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the boundaries of the Continental Shelf are determined by the Russian Federation (outside the 200-mile exclusive economic zone).

Russia has taken civilian measures to increase its competitiveness in the Arctic region. These measures are considered Article 38. They include the development of the Northern Sea Route and the creation of good conditions. Quality of transportation services and safety of navigation. Construction and modernization of terminals in Russian ports. Construction of access railways and highways. Ensuring the operation and development of port infrastructure.

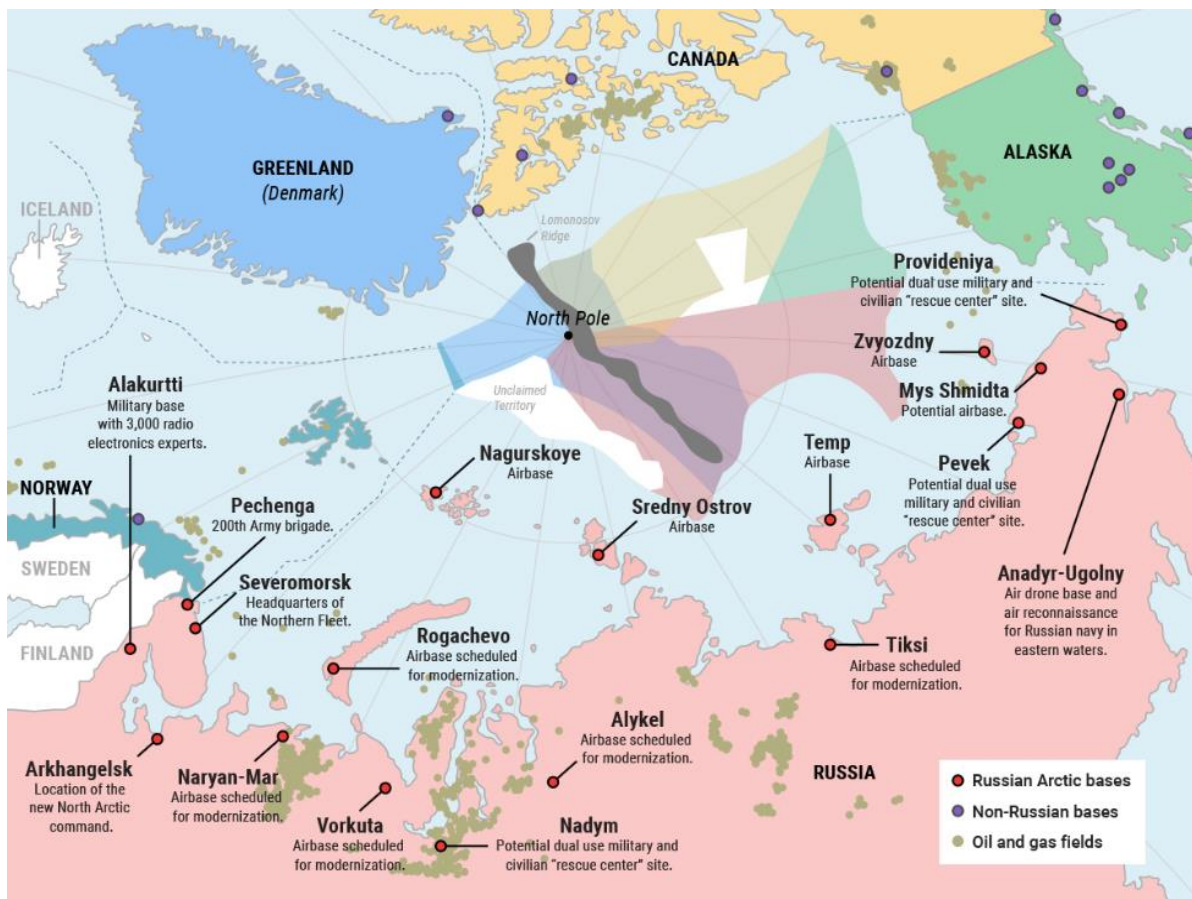
Article 50 of the published doctrine is all about the Arctic Sea. There are 21 additional articles under this article. Article 50 mentions regional maritime politics in the Arctic, the rich mineral and hydrocarbon resources in the Arctic Ocean, important transit routes and military security systems. The most important emphasis in this article is on the transformation of the navy on the Northern Sea Route into a global competitor. Other important elements are:

1. Diversification and intensification of maritime activities in Svalbard, Franz Josef Land, Novaya Zemlya and the Wrangel Islands;
2. To increase the combat potential of the Northern Fleet. Developing the base system, forces and means of the federal security service;
3. Construction of a trans-Arctic underwater fiber optic communication line for the transport complex of the Arctic region;
4. Improving the efficiency of public administration in the field of socio-economic development of the Arctic region;
5. Extending the outer boundary of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean
6. Ensuring security in the transport corridors of the Arctic region, the development of ice-breaking, rescue and auxiliary fleets;
7. Creation of favorable conditions for the activities of oil and gas producing and gas transport companies;
8. Maintaining control over the maritime activities of foreign states on the Northern Sea Route;
9. To strengthen the combat potential of the Northern and Pacific fleet forces.

The Arctic has an important position in the struggle for geopolitical territory. With the vast coastal area Russia has, the dominance seems to be in Russia. But there is a risk to this. Russia has to fight both in the energy fields and in the transit routes and achieve diplomatic success. Russia also needs allies in this region to be able to fight NATO and European countries. Therefore, close friendships were formed with China. Cooperation with China in the Arctic region is increasing. Their latest activity has been the buying of new icebreakers. With its financial resources, China is helping Russia to strengthen in the region. But because of the war with Ukraine, activity in the region needs to increase further. Russia has an area of 4 million square kilometers in the Arctic, through which it can communicate with 1400 ports around the world. So the Arctic region is very important economically.

Russia's new naval doctrine is like a challenge to both the Arctic and NATO. We see a profile of Russia refusing to be surrounded by NATO. This doctrine can be considered a new step for Russia's security. It is necessary to read the new doctrine together with the doctrine of 2015. Russia is taking a new stance against the encirclement in the Baltic and Arctic regions. Especially the emphasis on Svalbard, Franz Josef Land, Novaya Zemlya and Wrangel Island in Article 50 can be seen as a precaution against Sweden's NATO membership.

The new security measures in response to the United States, NATO, the Baltic states and the Northern European countries show Russia's desire to become stronger. Russia's security measures against NATO are proven by the new doctrine.



Map 1: Russian Bases in the Arctic (Business Insider, 2022).

In order to understand the developments in the Arctic region, first of all, the history and bilateral relations of the countries in the region should be known. Relations between countries are of primary importance in security studies. The Arctic region has a more critical importance as it borders both Russia and the Baltic states. Therefore, we need to analyze both the Soviet period and the present at the same time. For this reason, the study begins by describing the Arctic policies of Russia and the Soviet Union. Then, Russia's security policies on regional security will be discussed. After that, the importance of the NATO security organization, of which the countries of the region are members, for the Arctic will be discussed. The importance of NATO and its enlargement process for both former Soviet and Northern

European countries will be analyzed. In the last section, Finland and Sweden's NATO membership will be analyzed and their contributions to regional security will be examined. These discussions and research will be based on the doctrines issued by the Arctic countries. In general, the study will proceed with a qualitative research sample.

### NATO's Arctic Doctrine

The claims of countries in the Arctic region date back a long time. First, Canada in 1909, then the US in 1924 and the Soviet Union in 1926, published a decree and put forward their claims. After these years, the Arctic region became militarily active and economic investments started to be made in the Arctic region. The Soviet Union took the first step in this unmanned, cold and distant geography. The Soviets started their first policies in 1930 and started sending people to the region. Authorities first created settlements by sending criminals in prison here. After the settlements were established, the region was declared an industrial zone and business areas were established. Among the prisoners they sent to this region, the Soviet authorities specially selected the skilled and professional ones. In this way, the first settlements for the Arctic began to be established. Russia, which has the longest coast in the Arctic region, also faces security risks. Russia, which has to protect more areas, has to build its security theories over this area. In response, America is getting stronger in the region. The US is located in the region as a national power, but on the other hand, it works in partnership with NATO forces. At this point, Russia has to increase its security against NATO member countries as well as regional countries. On the other hand, for the first time after the end of the Cold War, NATO had defined the Arctic as a strategically important region that required new approaches and solutions. In 1999, NATO alliances first said that special strategies should be produced for the Arctic (Haftendorn, 2001, p.344).



**Figure 2:** NATO countries and Russia in the Arctic region (The Mainichi, 2022).

NATO has a wide area in the Arctic, together with Northern European countries with which it has been cooperating for many years. But it wants to expand this area further and advance in the Arctic Ocean. Russia's aggressive actions since 2014 have accelerated this process. NATO conducted its largest military exercise in the Arctic in 2022. Nearly 30,000 soldiers from 27 allied countries gathered for a possible attack on land, air and sea. Risks have re-emerged in a region that has not seen war since the World Wars. Increasing militarization and multiple crises in the region are important for the EU in terms of energy, economy and military. The EU and NATO have had to increase their cooperation in this region. In addition to the EU's diplomacy and dialogue policies, NATO's deterrence and defense alliance was integrated for the region. This alliance will respond to geopolitical mobility together.

International organizations may show a more oppressive behavior with their joint actions. At this point, we can cite the 5th article of NATO as an example. According to this article, there is a collective security. In order to ensure security in the North Atlantic region, member states will respond collectively to any attack. As a result, Russia's entry into a war with a NATO country means that it enters a war with all NATO countries. When we look at the Arctic borders from a broad perspective, America, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland form the Western bloc. Among these countries, America, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway are NATO members. The remaining Sweden and Finland entered the membership process. Among these countries, Norway has established a permanent military headquarters beyond the Arctic Circle. Thus, it became the only country in the world to have a permanent military headquarters beyond the Arctic circle (Haftendorn, Wallander and Keohane, 1999, p.12).

NATO's enlargement process is not static due to its open-door policy. Since its inception, NATO has gone through five phases of enlargement. This expansion has continued with Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states, the Baltics, the Black Sea and the Balkans. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Sweden and Finland decided to join NATO. This enlargement worries Russia on a number of issues. These include the loss of Kaliningrad in the Baltic Sea, which is part of the EU, the closure of the routes through the Baltic to the Port of St. Petersburg, and finally NATO's policy of containment of Russia extending to the Black Sea. In the wake of these concerns, Sweden and Finland's attempts to become NATO members in the Arctic region will lead to a complete NATO encirclement of Russia's west. On the other hand, Finland and Sweden will directly affect not only the Arctic region but also the Baltic Sea as Baltic states. Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland are strategically located in both the Arctic and Baltic regions. With this expansion, Russia will have to redesign its security in both the Baltic and Arctic regions. After Iceland, Norway and Denmark joined NATO in 1949 and Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia in 2004, Russia voiced its discontent in the Baltic region. Now, the NATO membership of Sweden and Finland, whose borders extend to the Arctic, would leave Russia's western region completely defenseless (Kuus, 2004).

There are many reasons for NATO's expansion in the Arctic. The most important one is the security problem in the region. NATO and non-NATO countries want to unite against military risks from Russia. The common enemy in the region and the awareness of Russian threats are forcing Northern Europe to unite. The growing Russian threat is likely to undermine other international organizations established in the region. Russia's withdrawal from international organizations such as the Barents Council, the Arctic Council and the Atlantic Council would further increase security concerns in the region. The disappearance of diplomatic solutions pushes the Arctic countries to the military sphere. Therefore, the orientation towards NATO, the largest military organization in the region, will increase. On the other hand, NATO's expansion in the region has implications for both member states and Russia. In terms of the member states, we will see the following events: A possible Russian military operation against Finland and Sweden, with which Russia has not hesitated to fight before, would affect all NATO countries. At a time when NATO's military expenditures are decreasing, more will be needed. Germany and France are uncomfortable with this spending and have previously spoken out against Trump. But with Eastern Europe at risk, it is unthinkable that they would oppose it. Still, the United States spends the most in NATO (Wade & Balakrishnan, 2022). To better understand NATO's enlargement policies, let us also examine Finland and Sweden's NATO membership and its consequences.

### **Arctic Expansion of NATO: NATO Membership of Sweden and Finland**

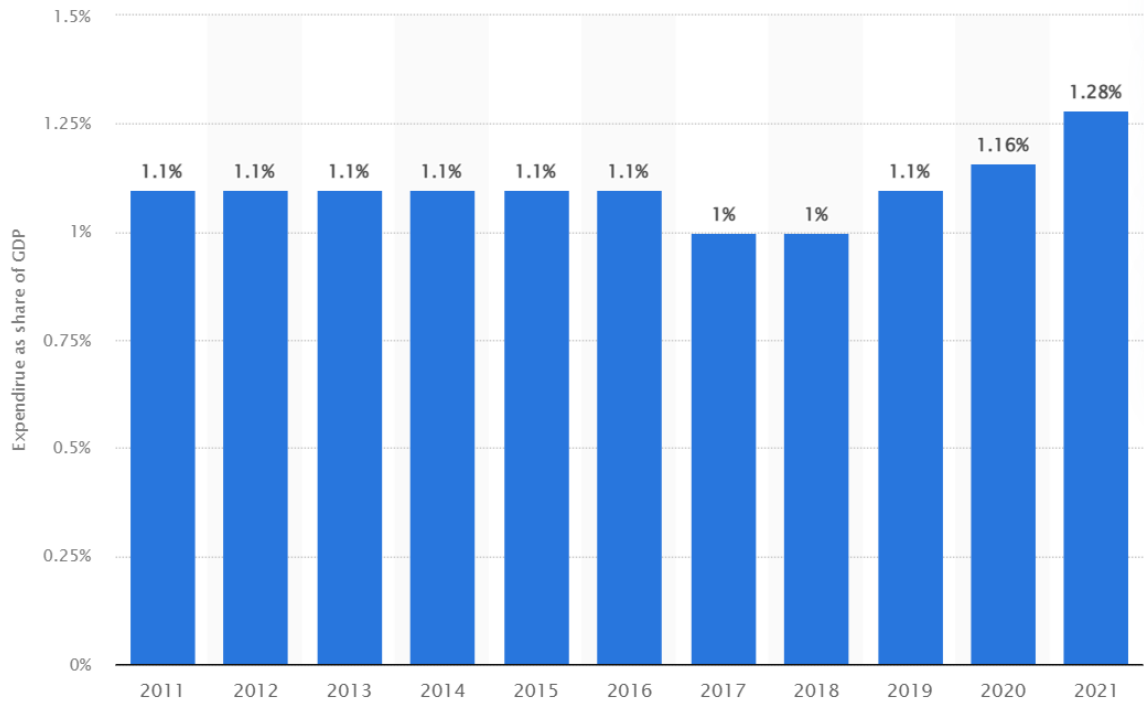
The Arctic region is turning into an area of long-term geostrategic competition. This rivalry will continue economically, politically, energy, politics and geography, but it does not make much sense to use the word war for the region. The form of political competition in the Arctic region is more distant and more rational than the conflict zones in the Middle East or Africa. The fact that important states in international organizations such as the European Union, NATO and the Arctic Council are neighbors here will force them to act more strategically in this region. The fact that the Arctic region is connected to Europe and has maritime borders with the United States and Canada makes this region more important for NATO. NATO, which was established by states focusing on security strategies on a global scale during the Cold War, is today seen as both a security provider and a threat to the Arctic. So a security dilemma has emerged in the Arctic region. On the other hand, for the first time since the Second World War, Europe felt war on its borders. European states, which have been at war every hundred years since the Westphalian period, are worried about a return to war (George Modelski and the Theory of Long



Cycles). With Finland's membership of NATO, Sweden is the last non-NATO member. The accession of the Arctic Council countries to NATO is perceived as a threat to Russia. On the other hand, with Sweden and Finland joining NATO, the Baltic Sea becomes a NATO lake. Moreover, the NATO membership of Finland and Sweden, which remained militarily neutral during the Cold War, leaves Russia as the only non-NATO country in the Atlantic Council. For many reasons, Russia's concerns are justified. Moreover, NATO's Article 5 provides for chain of custody, which means that an attack on one state in the region would be considered an attack on all NATO member states. In response, Russia is trying to find an ally in the Arctic. China is the largest state outside the Arctic. But things may not turn out the way Russia wants. China wants to use the Arctic route as a new silk road, which will facilitate its access to Europe. In other words, China plans to continue its trade with both Europe and Russia through reciprocal agreements.

On the other hand, Sweden and Finland, who are not strangers to each other and have a common history, are making joint decisions again after centuries. In 1155 Finland became part of the Kingdom of Sweden, during which time it was culturally influenced and Christianized by the Crusades in the 12th century. At the end of the Finnish War in 1809, Sweden lost Finland when Swedish and Russian forces faced each other. Finland, which was a colony of Russia for 108 years between 1809 and 1917, knows the Russians well because of its geopolitics. Sweden's last war was in 1814 and Finland's last war was in 1945. Finland fought against the Soviet Union between 1939-1940 and 1941-1944 and against Germany between 1944-1945. What should Sweden, which has not fought for 200 years, and these states, which have not fought for nearly 90 years, do now? In this context, the Swedish government has distributed war leaflets to every house in the country. The 20-page leaflet contains information on how soldiers should behave on the battlefield. The most important sentence is: "If Sweden is attacked by another country, we will never give up. All reports that the resistance has been stopped are false." The Swedish government and people are determined never to stop fighting in a possible war.

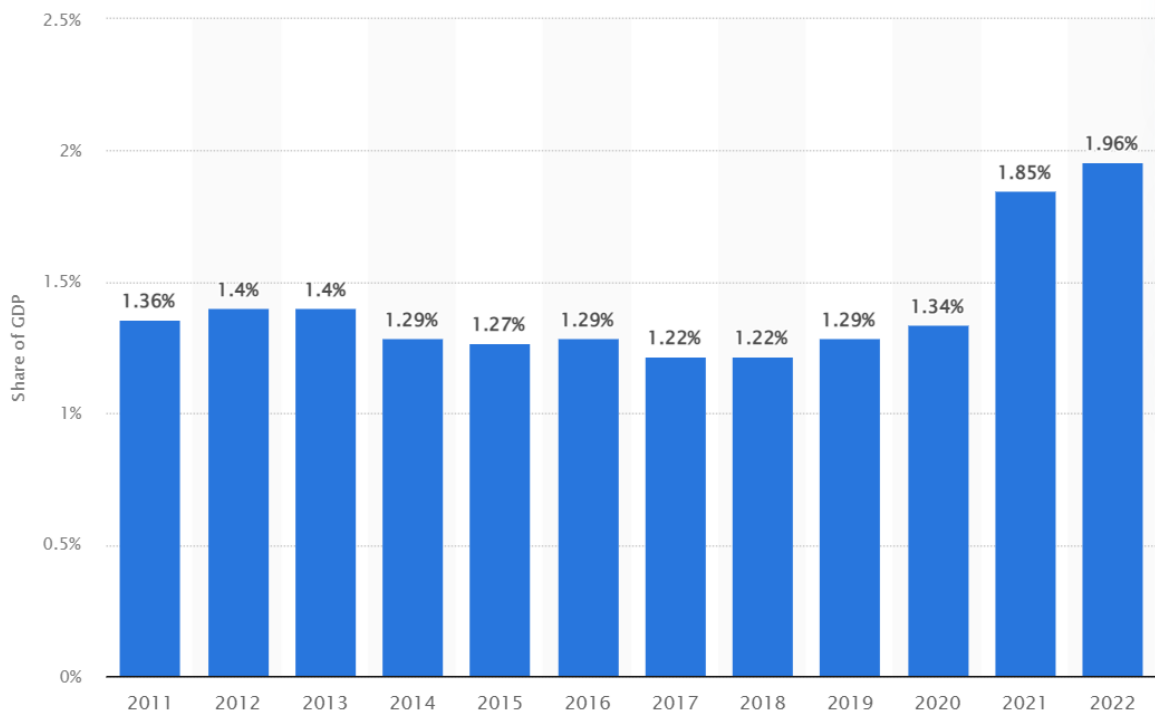
When we analyze Sweden's military expenditures, Russia's influence is more clearly seen. Sweden decided to double its military expenditures after Russia's attack on Ukraine. Sweden, which allocates 1.28 percent of its Gross National Product (GNP) to military spending, has increased its 2028 target to 2 percent. In 2011, Sweden, which allocated 1.1 percent of its GNP to military spending, took the first measures in its army after Russia attacked Ukraine. However, these measures are not enough against the Russian army. According to 2021 data, Russia allocates 4.1% of its GDP to military spending (Statista, 2022). Moreover, Sweden and Finland will already be required to allocate 2% of their GDP to defence as part of their NATO membership. However, Russia's security expenditure is already two times that of these countries and its GDP is 10 times higher.



**Chart 1:** Military expenditure as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) in Sweden from 2011 to 2021 (Statista, 2022).

Sweden, on the other hand, has had to reshape its 2030 targets according to Russia's threats. Defense spending in Sweden rose to over 48 billion Swedish kronor in 2021 and is expected to increase in the following years, reaching over 60 billion kronor in 2030.

Finland is in the same situation as Sweden. When we examine the table of military expenditures, we see a constant spending rate until 2020. However, there is an increase after 2021. We need to discuss a question here. When we analyze the military tables, why was there no military activity in these countries in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea? The answer to this question can be explained by the words of Swedish Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist: "As long as I am defense minister, Sweden will never be a member of NATO". Neither Finland nor Sweden wanted to join NATO. With Russia's military operation in Ukraine, Finland and Sweden had to change their preferences.



**Chart 2:** Defense expenditure as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) of Finland from 2011 to 2022 (Statista, 2022)

It is significant that Finland and Sweden have increased their military budgets ahead of NATO membership. The shape of Finland as a new member of NATO is a matter of debate. We should also take into account the military aid that NATO will send. Military deliveries were made in the days when Russia started its invasion of Ukraine. NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg also said about Sweden and Finland, which are in the process of NATO membership, "We will ensure their security until they become members". One thing is not clear at this point. Although Sweden is still in the process of membership, will Article 5 apply if the country is attacked in any way? With Finland's NATO membership, this article has become even more applicable.

From an international security perspective, NATO is important for Europe. There were earlier plans to establish a European security union, but they failed. The European security union will be completed with Finland, followed by countries such as Sweden, which also wants to join NATO. Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ukraine want to join NATO, which continues to expand with the accession of North Macedonia in 2020. There are reservations about the membership of war-torn Ukraine. The reason for this is Article 5. If Ukraine, which is already at war with Russia, becomes a member of NATO, it would mean that all NATO members would be at one-on-one war with Russia. It is therefore unlikely that NATO members would approve this. It should be remembered that NATO requires the unanimous vote of all members to become a member.

As a result, NATO has continued to expand since its inception. It emerged during the Cold War against the Soviet threat and has continued its development until today. NATO is the most widely recognized institution worldwide that meets the security concerns of countries. On the other hand, NATO has reached Russia's borders, raising security concerns in Russia. Russia is disturbed by the fact that NATO, which has the world's most powerful armies and economies, has reached its borders. On the other hand, Russia's threat to the former Soviet countries increases the importance of NATO for these countries. We can illustrate this as follows: Former Soviet countries Estonia (2004), Lithuania (2004) and Latvia (2004) became NATO members. Georgia and Ukraine are among the other former Soviet countries seeking NATO membership. Measures include Azerbaijan's relationship with Turkey, Armenia's close policy with the United States and measures taken against the repressive policies of the Soviets.

NATO membership for the Baltic and Northern European countries is the most comprehensive safeguard against the Russian threat. Sweden will remain in NATO, both militarily and politically, even if it is not yet an official member. Being a NATO member is more than hiding behind an "iron curtain".

NATO has some responsibilities. Sending troops to military operations overseas, making military expenditures for NATO, authorizing NATO's military plans within a country's borders, planning the location of NATO military bases. These can create unease for a country. Some countries may even perceive this as interference in their internal affairs. This is why countries such as Finland and Sweden have so far not become NATO members. But Russia's threats are big enough to impose these responsibilities. It is therefore inevitable that countries will accept these responsibilities within their own capacities.

While there is no complete scientific consensus on the scientifically predictable implications of Finland's NATO membership and Sweden's possible membership for the Baltic and Arctic, we can discuss the possible implications by considering some factors.

**Military Balances:** NATO membership will inevitably have an impact on the military balance in the Arctic and Baltic Seas. With NATO accession, NATO's military presence in the region is strengthening and will become a counterweight to Russia's regional policies. NATO as a whole, not the countries, is positioned against Russia. In this case, changes in Russia's policies in the region and harsher policies may be observed.

**Alliance Security and Defence Capacity:** NATO membership will increase the security and defence capacity of other NATO members in the Arctic and Baltic Seas. It will have a positive impact on activities such as military exercises, joint defence plans and military infrastructure development in the region. This would strengthen the overall security of the region and enhance the defence capabilities of alliance members.

**Relations with Russia:** NATO membership will directly affect relations with Russia. Russia may view Sweden's and Finland's accession to NATO in a negative light, which could lead to tensions in relations. This could be an important factor for security and stability in the Arctic and Baltic Seas. Strained relations may affect the political and military dynamics in the region. However, it does not mean the end of regional co-operation. Collective efforts, such as the Arctic Council, have a positive impact on bilateral relations between Russia and its member states. Focusing on the war with NATO enlargement would be unfair to the alliances in the region. Cooperation in the Arctic region takes place in various fields. Energy resources, maritime security, scientific research, environmental protection and sustainability are the focal points of cooperation efforts. Arctic countries aim to protect mutual interests by cooperating in areas such as sustainable management of energy resources, maritime security and scientific research. Multilateral approaches in the region reduce the risks of conflict. Cooperation and dialogue in the Arctic region usually takes place within a multilateral framework. Platforms such as the Arctic Council promote multilateralism among the countries of the region. Such mechanisms increase participation by bringing together Arctic countries as well as indigenous peoples and observer countries.

### **Conclusion, Discussion, and Implications**

With 60% of its territory located in the Arctic, Russia is the most important actor in the region. With an average Arctic coastline of 24,140 km, it is the country with the most maritime rights and energy exploitation rights. When depicted, these borders include the Sea of Okhotsk in the east, the Bering Sea in the west, the East Siberian Sea, the Laptev Sea, the Black Sea and the Barents Sea in the region up to the Norwegian border (Arctic Institute), 1996). Russia, which has the largest area in terms of coastal length and sea capacity, has 70% of the energy in the Arctic (USGS, 2010). In addition, Russia's strategic importance is increasing with the emergence of new transportation routes connecting Asia and Europe as a result of melting glaciers. In other words, Russia's increasing economic, energy and geostrategic importance can be seen as normal national security concerns. In order to address its security concerns in the Barents and Arctic Seas, Russia is pursuing an aggressive policy towards the bordering countries. At this point, although Sweden and Finland had previously declared that they did not want to become NATO members, Russia continued to increase tensions in this region and continued to pose a threat.

We are in a period when international conflicts continue to be regionalized. One of the questions we seek to answer within the scope of this study is: Can a new one be added to the ongoing regional conflicts in the Middle East, West Asia, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa? This concern is increasing international cooperation and dividing the world into new poles. The latest conflict hypothesis is in the Arctic region. Diplomatic steps have been taken by Russia, the Baltic States and Northern European countries to prevent the relations they have been developing through diplomacy for many years, but to no

avail. In 2004, Russia rejected the Baltic states' membership of NATO. Today, however, its borders are surrounded by NATO. This is the result of a process that started with Russia's invasion of Crimea. The Arctic will be a region where NATO will be strengthened in the new era. After the aggressions, Russia contributed to NATO's expansion and helped it expand to its borders. As Russia wanted to expand into the former Soviet territories, it also caused NATO to expand. As a result, NATO continues its mission against the Soviets by expanding its mission against the new Soviet country Russia. Thus, NATO faced the same enemy 30 years later, albeit with a new name (Soviet).

NATO and Russia have been exercising in the Arctic region for a long time. This creates a 'security dilemma' even though it is a result of the different security concerns of the countries. Whether the continuation of NATO's expansionist policies is a cause or a consequence is a matter of debate. However, Russia's approach to the former Soviet countries pushes these countries to NATO. In other words, we can say that Russia's aggression has led to NATO's expansion. At this point, NATO's expansion is not a cause but a consequence. Russia's pressure pushes these regional states to NATO and causes an involuntary expansion. Whatever the cause or the effect, there is a growing NATO. This growth or expansion (whatever we call it) has reached Russia's firewalls. While NATO's new members provide both military and financial support to NATO, Russia's military expansion comes at an additional cost. This is why Russia has increased its security measures both at sea and on its European borders, as well as its activities in the Arctic. As a result, new memberships to NATO reveal Russia's military spending and aggressive offensive nature. It is unclear how far NATO will continue to expand with its open door policy while Russia is looking for new alliances.

### **Ethical Declaration**

In the writing process of the study titled “*The Impact of NATO Enlargement on Russian Security in the Baltic and Arctic*”, there were followed the scientific, ethical and the citation rules; was not made any falsification on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic platform for evaluation.

### **Declaration of Conflict**

There is no potential conflict of interest in the study.

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## TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

Rusya merkezli Arktik ve Baltık bölgesinde uluslararası gerilimler artarak devam ediyor. Baltık ülkeleri ve eski Sovyet ülkeleri Rusya'nın Kırım'ı ilhak etmesinden, Ukrayna'ya saldırmasından ve güvenliğe yönelik tehdidinden dolayı endişe duyuyor. Bu nedenle, Kuzey Kutbu, Baltık ülkeleri ve Avrupa, yeni güvenlik önlemleri almaya çalışıyor. Buna bağlı olarak 2004 yılında başlayan bir güvenlik entegrasyonu mevcut. Baltık ülkelerinin NATO üyeliği, Kuzey Kutbu ülkelerinin NATO'ya girmesi ve bölgenin NATO tarafından kuşatılması Rusya'yı kendi güvenliği açısından endişelendiriyor. Bu noktada bir güvenlik ikilemi ortaya çıkıyor.

Rusya son zamanlarda en kapsamlı doktrinini yayınladı. Doktrine göre, sadece Kuzey Kutbu'nda değil, tüm okyanuslarda ve denizlerde, sınırın ötesinde çok geniş bir alana yayılma arzusu var. Buna karşılık, Kuzey Avrupa ve Arktik ülkeleri kendileri için korunan bir alan arayışına girdiler. Bu koruma alanı da bir güvenlik kalkını görevi gören ve dünyada en geniş alana sahip olan NATO oldu. NATO'nun kuruluş amacı olan Sovyetler Birliği tehdidi bu sefer Rusya ile birlikte yeniden ortaya çıktı. Diğer bir deyişle NATO yeniden kuruluş amacının ilkelerine dönüyor. Bu noktada uluslararası güvenlik kavramı da aynı şekilde ilerlemeye devam edecek ve NATO genişlemesi sürdürülecek gibi görünüyor.

Finlandiya ve İsveç'in NATO üyeliğine olan yaklaşımı, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'yı işgal etmesiyle daha net görülüyor. Daha önce NATO üyesi olmak istemediklerini söyleyen Finlandiya, 2014 sonrası dönem ve 2022'de Ukrayna'nın işgali ile birlikte kararını verdi. Bu hem Avrupa hem de Kuzey Kutbu için önemli bir karar. Diğer yandan Arktik ülkeleri ve Arktik Konseyi ülkeleri arasında Rusya, NATO üyesi olmayan tek

üye olarak kalıyor. Buna karşılık olarak, Arktik Okyanusu'nun en uzun kıyısına sahip olan Rusya, hem savunma hem de saldırı mekanizmalarını geliştirmek zorunda hissediyor.

NATO'nun Kuzey Kutbu, Doğu Avrupa ve Baltıklar'a genişlemesiyle birlikte 1948'den bu yana en uzun alana hakim olması bekleniyor. Finlandiya ve İsveç'in NATO üyeliğinin Rus saldırılarını ne kadar önleyeceği ve caydırıcı olacağını ölçülemek zor. Ancak NATO, hem önleme hem de caydırıcılık açısından dünyanın geniş bölgelerinde en etkili güvenlik örgütüdür. Sonuç olarak NATO, kuruluş amacına uygun bir ortamı yeniden yakalamış durumda ve bu durumun avantajı ile yayılcı politikalarını sürdürerek Arktik Okyanusu ve devletlerinin güvenliğini korumaya kararlı. Bu, enerjinin, transit yolların ve bölge ekonomisinin güvenliği, bölge halkının huzuru için bölge ülkeleri tarafından bir şart olarak görülüyor. Çalışma içerisinde, NATO'nun genişleme şekli hem Kuzey'de hem de Rusya'da nasıl hissediliyor? Baltık ve Arktik devletleri buna ne kadar istekli? İsveç ve Finlandiya'nın askeri harcamaları buna elverişli mi? Sorularına cevap aranacak ve yayınlanan yeni güvenlik doktrinleri ile sonuca ulaşılmaya çalışılacaktır.