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Power Institutions and International Collaboration on the Kola Peninsula

Introduction

- 1 The Kola Peninsula in the north-western corner of the Russian Federation was one of the most heavily militarized regions of the world a couple of decades ago. Still home to the Russian Northern Fleet, it is assumed that the influence of the military and other power institutions is more significant here than elsewhere in Russia. On the other hand, the region has since the end of the Cold War been drawn into an extensive network of international collaboration of a civilian nature with its Scandinavian neighbours. The Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) was established in 1993 between several North European states and regional administrative entities in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia¹. The aim is to encourage interaction across the old East–West divide in the European North, and the partnership involves collaborative projects in a number of sectors, ranging from trade and industry to student exchange and indigenous issues². In addition, wide-ranging bilateral cooperation schemes have developed between Russia and the Scandinavian countries to solve particular problems or meet particular challenges in the North. Notably, the valuable fish resources of the adjacent Barents Sea are managed bilaterally by Norway and Russia, and various Western states have taken upon themselves to help to alleviate the environmental problems on the Kola Peninsula.
- 2 This article describes how international collaboration has affected the relationship between the military or other power institutions and ‘civilian’ authorities in the region in three issue areas: fisheries management (where the Federal Border Service was given responsibility for enforcement at sea in 1998), nuclear safety (where the Northern Fleet is responsible for some of the gravest problems), and the fight against communicable diseases (where the involvement of prison authorities under the Ministry of Justice is necessary for effective treatment)³. To place the discussion in a wider perspective, we first give a brief presentation of the Kola Peninsula and civil–military relations in the area.

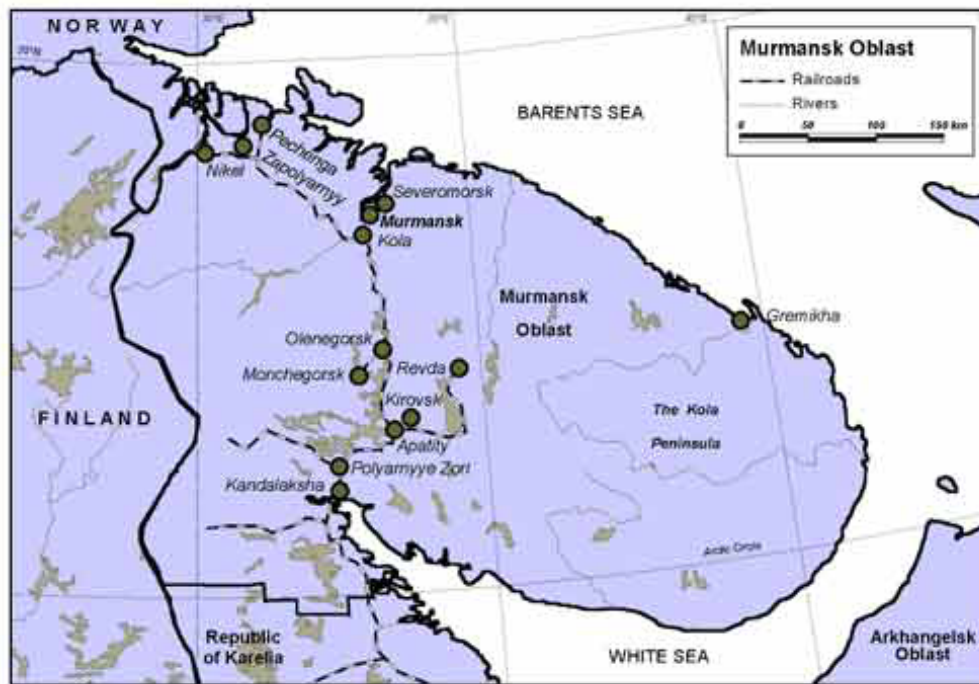
Murmansk Oblast in brief

- 3 Murmansk Oblast, covering the geographical area of the Kola Peninsula, is a prime example of the Soviet industrial and military adventure. While permanent settlements had been established in the sixteenth century, the Kola Peninsula was inhabited by only a few thousand people when the First World War started. By the end of the Cold War, it had the world’s largest number of nuclear warheads, it was the country’s most developed fish-processing region – and it had become infamous for its environmental degradation.
- 4 The lack of ice-free ports in European Russia, except for those in the Black and Baltic Seas where the Russian fleets could easily be cut off at narrow straits, prompted the construction of the Murman Railway, which reached the Kola Fjord in 1916. The same year the supply port of Romanov-na-Murmane was founded at the railway terminus. In 1917, its name was changed to Murmansk. The development of fisheries was a main priority at the outset. Towards the end of the Soviet era, Murmansk had the largest fish-processing plant in the Soviet Union; some 80,000 people were working in the region’s fishing industry; and total catches amounted to 1.5 mill. tonnes annually.
- 5 The Soviet Northern Fleet was established in 1933. For more than two decades, it remained the smallest of the Soviet Navy’s four fleets. In the 1950s, a period of expansion set in, which coincided with the onset of the Soviet struggle to achieve nuclear parity with the United States. The country’s first nuclear-powered submarine was stationed at Zapadnaya Litsa on the Kola Peninsula in 1958. Over the ensuing decade, the Northern Fleet continued to expand, acquiring a large number of nuclear-powered submarines. By the late 1960s, it had surpassed the other Soviet naval fleets in size and significance.

- 6 The civilian sector of the post-war economy in the oblast came to be dominated by heavy industry. Entire towns – like Nikel, Monchegorsk, Apatity and Kirovsk – were built from scratch around large mining, metallurgical and chemical enterprises. Many of these industrial centres were constructed along the Murman Railway, which still constitutes the infrastructural backbone of the Kola Peninsula. Non-ferrous mining and metallurgy (primarily nickel and copper) and fertilizer production from mined phosphates are particularly important.
- 7 The industrialization of the Kola Peninsula involved mass immigration to the area, mainly from the rest of Russia as well as from Ukraine and Belorussia. By the end of the Soviet period, the population of Murmansk Oblast had reached nearly 1.2 mill. Immigrants were attracted by a number of advantages granted to the inhabitants of the Soviet North, including higher wages, a lower retirement age and subsidized holidays at Black Sea resorts. The standard of living was well above the Soviet average, but many still regarded it as a temporary place of residence rather than as their permanent home, and returned to their former areas of residence upon retirement. Personnel turnover was particularly high in fisheries and the military sector.
- 8 Much changed with the break-up of the Soviet Union and the ensuing economic reforms. Many people lost their savings in the early 1990s inflation and were no longer in a financial position to buy a home in more temperate parts of Russia when they retired. Most of the previous privileges related to working in the North disappeared. Nevertheless, reduced birth rate and increased out-migration among younger people caused the population of Murmansk Oblast to drop to below one million around the turn of the millennium.
- 9 Most sectors of the economy experienced serious changes during the 1990s. Russian fishermen started to deliver their catches abroad, so the land-based processing of fish in Murmansk nearly came to a halt by the mid-1990s. Total catches also declined by more than 50 per cent since Russian shipowners could no longer afford to send their vessels to long-distance fishing in the waters off Africa and South America. In the military sector, the number of vessels in the Northern Fleet has been more than halved since 1991, largely as a result of international disarmament obligations. Further, reduced budget allocations made it difficult for the Northern Fleet to carry out the planned maintenance of vessels still in operation, which has led to considerable problems at the region's four or five large naval shipyards. Strikes and social unrest in the housing towns around these shipyards became a recurrent theme in regional media in the late 1990s.
- 10 Much attention has been given to the environmental problems of Murmansk Oblast since the break-up of the Soviet Union. The nickel smelters in Nikel and Monchegorsk emit large quantities of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), causing considerable acid precipitation both on the Kola Peninsula and in the neighbouring Nordic countries. The Northern Fleet and the Murmansk Shipping Company, the owner of the nuclear-powered ice-breakers stationed in Murmansk, had been experiencing capacity problems for storing radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel since the 1960s. Up until 1992, parts of this waste were dumped in the Barents and Kara Seas. The decommissioning of naval vessels since the late 1980s increased the problem. First, the existing infrastructure allows for the de-fuelling of only a handful of submarines a year. Second, existing intermediate storage facilities for spent nuclear fuel and for liquid and solid waste have long since been filled to capacity, which means that large amounts of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste are stored under unsatisfactory conditions. Third, the spent nuclear fuel intended for reprocessing has been leaving the region very slowly, partly because of limited infrastructure for transporting it.
- 11 Along with the general betterment of the Russian economy since the crisis of 1998, the social and economic situation in Murmansk Oblast has also improved. Population size continues to

decline and the environmental problems are far from solved, but high hopes are attached to the future development of oil and gas in the Barents Sea.⁴

Figure 1 The Kola Peninsula/Murmansk Oblast



Civil–military relations on the Kola Peninsula

- 12 During the Soviet era, there was little interaction between the military and civilian sectors of Murmansk Oblast⁵. The two structures relied on separate communication infrastructures, and the majority of the servicemen with their families lived either in military towns or settlements built to serve the naval or air bases, or on the territory of the garrison where they served. For all practical purposes, the military was “a state within the state”. Has this traditionally strict compartmentalization been relaxed in the post-Soviet period?
- 13 One of the most conspicuous features related to the military presence in the area is the existence of six ‘closed towns’ on the Kola Peninsula. In 1992, the Law on Closed Administrative-Territorial Formations was introduced to regulate the status of some forty formerly closed cities in the Russian Federation. The previously so-secret cities were now ‘opened’ or subjected to a ‘civilianization’ in the sense that their existence was officially admitted. They were now included on ordinary maps and given civilian names instead of their previous numbered designations. A closed administrative-territorial formation, a ZATO in its Russian abbreviation (*zakrytoe administrativno-territorial’noe obrazovanie*), differs from ordinary military bases inasmuch as it is a political and administrative entity (at the local level) in its own right, with its own civilian authorities. On the other hand, it is not subordinate to the subject of the Russian Federation on whose territory it is located, but is directly subordinate to the Ministry of Defence⁶. Further, a ZATO is allowed to keep all its tax revenues for itself, and its inhabitants enjoy special privileges in the social sphere⁷.
- 14 Murmansk Oblast is the federal subject in Russia with the highest number of ZATOs⁸. There are six of them, all serving as residence towns for the naval bases and workers within the region’s naval shipyards. Zaozersk (formerly Murmansk-150) is located southeast of the Rybachii Peninsula close to the Norwegian border; Skalistyi (formerly Murmansk-130), Snezhnogorsk (formerly Murmansk-60), Poliarnyi and Vidiaevo are on the western side and Severomorsk on the eastern side of the Kola Fjord, all just north of Murmansk City. Together they have a population of some 150,000, with Severomorsk accounting for about one half of this total.

- 15 The general picture is that, despite some moves towards increased civil–military integration, the old partition remains. Distance largely limits integration to the military settlements that are located in the vicinity of Murmansk – Severomorsk and, to some extent, also Polyarnyi, Snezhnogorsk, Vidiaevo and Skalistyi. Here it should be noted that ZATO status is related mainly to financial, not security factors. Severomorsk, Polyarnyi and Vidiaevo were all given this status several years after the ZATO regime was established, and their chief argument – which had the backing of regional authorities – was that the Ministry of Defence should take financial responsibility for these largely military settlements. While ZATO status is generally perceived as a financial security for the towns, the inhabitants of the ZATOs on the Kola Peninsula experienced considerable hardship in the late 1990s due to the strained economy of the Northern Fleet and of the naval shipyards in the region.
- 16 Military units have increasingly come to rely on local or regional authorities or civilian enterprises for material support. A conspicuous illustration of this dependence is the practice whereby civilian institutions and enterprises literally sponsor military units. The institution or enterprise in question ‘adopts’ the unit and agrees to provide material support. The practice of adoption took on new proportions in 1997, when Governor Yuriy Yevdokimov invited all the regions of Russia to sponsor the submarine of the Northern Fleet. The ties between region and vessel are strengthened by renaming the vessel after the sponsoring region and manning it with draftees from that particular part of Russia. Apparently, this campaign has been a great success.
- 17 The military sector has proven more of a burden than blessing to Murmansk Oblast in the post-Soviet period⁹. In addition to the palpable environmental degradation left by radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, the region’s civilian sector was not left untouched by the social problems affecting the ZATOs and military garrisons in the late 1990s. Regional authorities, local authorities outside the ZATOs and civilian enterprises and organizations took it upon themselves to provide the military units and settlements with material assistance. However, this burden would have been far heavier if the ZATOs had not been financed by the Ministry of Defence.
- 18 The military presence on the Kola Peninsula also represents a problem for the regional economy in the sense that it makes access to military zones or ZATOs for non-residents, especially foreigners but also Russians, more difficult. A recurrent obstacle in the nuclear safety collaboration between Norway and Russia (see below) has been the refusal of Russian authorities to grant Norwegians access to storage sites for nuclear waste located within ZATOs or even more restricted zones¹⁰. Collaborative projects involving the Norwegian fishing industry and the small fishing community of Teriberka on the northern coast of the Kola Peninsula have been hampered, as this village is administratively part of the ZATO of Severomorsk. Likewise, joint fishery-research cruises in the Russian zone of the Barents Sea – a tradition dating back several decades, and central to the management regime for the Barents Sea fisheries – came to a halt in the late 1990s in acquiescence to protests from the Northern Fleet¹¹.

Power institutions and international collaboration

Fisheries enforcement

- 19 The main fish stocks of the Barents Sea have been managed jointly by Norway and the Soviet Union/Russian Federation since 1976. At the time, negotiations at the third UN Law of the Sea Conference had established the principle of 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zones, and the principle that coastal states cooperate in managing fish stocks straddling between their respective economic zones. Hence, the fisheries management collaboration between the Soviet Union/Russian Federation follows from the countries’ obligations according to the law of the sea.
- 20 In the Joint Russian–Norwegian Fisheries Commission – the institutional hub of the collaboration – the two countries agree on total quotas, which are then shared between them according to fixed distribution keys. (The most important stocks are shared 50–50.) In 1993, this collaboration was extended to include also enforcement of fisheries regulations, after a

massive Russian overfishing had been documented the year before. Main responsibility for the enforcement collaboration was given to the newly established Russian–Norwegian Permanent Committee for Fisheries Regulation and Enforcement Collaboration, subordinate to the Joint Commission¹².

21 Exchange of information between the enforcement bodies of the two countries started immediately. The most important measure was supplying information on Russian catches landed in Norway to the Russian enforcement authorities. Russian overfishing in 1992 had occurred because Russian vessels had been landing increasing shares of their catches in Norwegian ports, and the Russian authorities were unable to keep track of these landings. As a result of the enforcement cooperation between Norway and Russia, landing data were now automatically conveyed from the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries to the Russian regional enforcement body, Murmanrybvod (‘Murmansk fisheries inspection service’). Additionally, routines were established for the informal exchange of information between the Norwegian Coast Guard and Murmanrybvod about the situation at sea. The Permanent Committee also administered the exchange of personnel (inspectors and observers) and was engaged in coordinating regulation and enforcement activities in the two countries more generally.

22 On the Russian side, fisheries management has traditionally been the sole responsibility of the ‘fishery complex’ of the Soviet/Russian bureaucracy. During the final years of Soviet rule, the Ministry of Fishing Industry was responsible for all aspects of fisheries management. When the Soviet Union was dissolved and the Russian Federation established, the State Committee for Fisheries appeared as the responsible body of governance at the federal level. State committees were independent bodies of governance at the level immediately below that of a ministry, i.e. not subordinate to a ministry, but without representation on the cabinet. A department within the State Committee, Glavrybvod (‘main fisheries inspection service’), was responsible for enforcement and surveillance in the fisheries sector.

23 In August 1997, responsibility for enforcement at sea was transferred from the State Committee for Fisheries and Glavrybvod to the Federal Border Service¹³. The decision to strip the Committee of responsibility for enforcement was followed by a media campaign – obviously arranged by the ‘power agencies’ and, many would have it, the presidential administration – depicting it as corrupt and hence unfit for this type of task¹⁴. However, the decision met with fierce resistance throughout the fishing industry and was not implemented until one year later, in July 1998. In the North, the Murmansk State Inspection of the Federal Border Service was established to take care of fisheries enforcement. The old regional inspection body, Murmanrybvod, was not willing to relinquish its traditional tasks without a fight: it succeeded in retaining responsibility for inspections in port and in international convention areas, the processing of catch information from the fishing vessels, and the opening and closing of fishing grounds with excessive intermingling of undersized fish. The Federal Border Service was left with one task: inspections in the Russian economic zone, which makes little sense if it is not coordinated with the remaining enforcement activities.¹⁵

24 The Federal Border Service was given representation on the Russian delegation to the Permanent Committee for Fisheries Regulation and Enforcement Collaboration with Norway in 1999. At first, the Border Service representative was obviously not “accepted” by the other members of his delegation, who were all from the traditional “fisheries complex”¹⁶. The Norwegian delegation, for its part, saw the challenge in conveying Norwegian experience from coordinating fisheries enforcement between a civilian Directorate of Fisheries and a military Coast Guard. Gradually the tension between the Border Service and Murmanrybvod loosened up, within the Permanent Committee and outside it, and the two agencies started coordinating their activities. While it would probably be an exaggeration to attribute this only to the cooperation with Norway, the Russian delegates confirmed that the Permanent Committee provided an arena where representatives of various Russian agencies could ‘learn to know each other’ outside their everyday life back home in Murmansk. Further, Norwegian experience from similar civil–military coordination in fisheries enforcement proved fruitful in the situation that had developed in Russia.

Nuclear safety

- 25 During the 1990s, the radiation threat from north-western Russia caused considerable public concern in the Nordic countries, especially in Norway. Hazards were perceived to emanate from unsatisfactory storage of large quantities of radioactive waste, decommissioned nuclear submarines awaiting dismantling, and the continued working of Kola Nuclear Power Plant at Polyarnye Zori. This led to the establishment of several international collaborative arrangements, both bilateral and multilateral, aimed at reducing that threat. A Norwegian Plan of Action for Nuclear Safety in areas adjacent to Norway's borders was established in 1995. A Framework Agreement on Nuclear Safety was signed between Norway and Russia and a Joint Commission to oversee its implementation set up in 1998.
- 26 At the multilateral level, the Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation was signed by Russia and several Western states in 2003. More important from a financial point of view is that the G7 in 2002 pledged to raise USD 20 billion over the following ten years for non-proliferation projects, chiefly in Russia. The decommissioning of nuclear submarines on the Kola Peninsula is among the priority issues of this initiative.
- 27 The nuclear safety collaboration between Russia and Norway is mainly found in the following four clusters: i) at state level between the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Russian federal energy authorities; ii) between the two states' Ministries of Defence (mainly through the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation that Norway, Russia and the US established in 1996), iii) through the Joint Russian–Norwegian Environmental Protection Commission, established in 1988; and iv) in the more technical nuclear safety cooperation between radiation protection authorities in the two countries. From the Norwegian side, the Plan of Action has been the financial muscle of the collaboration, supporting projects related to safety at nuclear installations (nuclear power plants, civilian and naval nuclear powered vessels and reprocessing facilities, unsatisfactory management and storage of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel and various arms-related environmental hazards. Some € 125 mill. have so far been allotted to the Plan of Action, which includes such high-profiled projects as the upgrading of the Kola nuclear power plant at Polyarnye Zori, expansion of the effluent treatment facility for liquid radioactive waste in Murmansk, building of a specialized railway rolling stock for transport of spent nuclear fuel, and removal of damaged fuel from the north-west Russian icebreaker fleet's old storage vessel for radioactive waste, the Lepse (the vessel itself contaminated by radioactivity)¹⁷.
- 28 Overall, the collaboration between Norway and Russia in nuclear safety has been far more problematic than the two countries' cooperation in fisheries management. Most problems are found in the high-profile constructions projects mentioned above, which have also taken the lion's share of the funds under the Norwegian Plan of Action. The Lepse project is extremely difficult in technical terms and has so far not really got off the ground. The railway rolling stocks were actually built, but disagreement about their ownership arose when they were completed. The effluent treatment facility for liquid radioactive waste in Murmansk was long considered a success story of the Plan of Action, but the opening of the facility was postponed time and again. Eventually, it seems it will never be put to work. The issue of liability has been a recurrent problem in many construction projects, as has disagreement about technical solutions. As far as finance is concerned, many Norwegian project partners (and Russian ones, too) oppose the lack of transparency in Russian project implementation and rumours of corruption are widespread.
- 29 The well-known Russian lack of horizontal integration between governing agencies, and the high level of conflict between them, is visible also in nuclear safety issues. Since the 1990s, major lines of conflict have run between the federal and regional authorities, between the civilian and military sector, and between environmental agencies and 'user groups'. In particular, the 'nuclear complex' agencies such as the former Ministry of Atomic Energy (Minatom) (see note 6) have repeatedly sought to curb the competence of the federal radiation safety authority¹⁸. Working relations seem to be characterized by a *modus vivendi* between individuals who have been forced, largely due to international projects, to maintain a certain level of contact with each other. To some extent, intra-agency collaboration on nuclear safety

on the Kola Peninsula has been formalized. For example, in 1998 an agreement was signed between Minatom and the administration of Murmansk Oblast on cooperation in the treatment of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel. Two years later, a more general agreement was concluded on coordination of activities within the sphere of nuclear safety between Murmansk Oblast administration and a range of federal agencies present in the region, including the Northern Fleet. In 1999, a Committee for Conversion and Nuclear Radiation Safety was established at the Murmansk Oblast administration to coordinate activities in the field. Again, while the international collaboration may not take full credit for getting various Russian agencies to join forces – and Russian bodies of governance do get new incentives to fight when Western assistance involves big money¹⁹ – coordination of the activities of various agencies, and the involvement of the Northern Fleet in particular, has been imposed largely through projects financed from abroad.

The fight against communicable diseases

30 In the late 1990s, the health situation in north-western Russia caused serious concern among medical experts and officials in the Nordic countries. Tuberculosis, which in Western societies had been more or less eliminated or at least controlled effectively, was re-emerging, and an HIV/AIDS epidemic was looming. To meet this challenge, the Barents Health Programme was established in 1999 under the auspices of the BEAR collaboration. Two years later, the Task Force on Communicable Disease Control in the Baltic Sea Region was set up by the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The fact that the initiative and most of the financing came from Norway gave the programme a geographical bias towards north-western Russia, i.e. Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Oblasts, despite its ‘Baltic’ designation²⁰. The Barents Health Programme covers various aspects of health collaboration with Russia, but with a main focus on communicable diseases, tuberculosis in particular²¹. From 2001 to 2004, the Task Force implemented approximately 200 projects in fields such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and public health reform in the north-western parts of Russia and the Baltic states. In 2004, Task Force activities were subsumed under the EU Northern Dimension programme.

31 The health collaboration between north-western Russia and the Nordic countries is generally considered successful, although it is still too early to evaluate the medical effectiveness of the programmes. There has been some reluctance among federal Russian health authorities, e.g. to the expressed intention of the Nordic countries to contribute to the introduction of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) tuberculosis strategy DOTS (directly observed treatment with short-course chemotherapy) in Russia. This strategy deviates sharply from the Soviet tuberculosis tradition, with its emphasis on institutionalization of patients, individualized treatment regimes and surgery. Interestingly, the north-west Russian regions introduced the DOTS strategy despite this reluctance, and even opposition in some cases, from federal authorities. To a large extent, this can probably be explained by the fact that Western governments offered financial resources that federal Russian authorities were not able to provide.

32 A major problem in the fight against communicable diseases in Russia is the lack of integration among various governing agencies, and in particular the reluctance of ‘uniformed services’ to work together with the civilian health-care authorities. For example, more than a dozen federal agencies – among them the Ministries of Health, Justice, Railroads, Interior, Defence, Merchant Marine, River Transportation, Oil and Gas and Civil Aviation – had their own tuberculosis programmes, working independently of the tuberculosis strategy of the health authorities proper. Nowhere is the problem more palpable than in the prisons, which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice.

33 The overcrowded Russian prisons, with ineffective ventilation systems and usually poor hygiene, are a breeding ground for tuberculosis. The relatively high prevalence of HIV caused by intravenous drug use and other high-risk behaviour increases the likelihood of further infections, or the progression of inert to active and contagious tuberculosis. The infected inmates are not only a danger to each other. Prison sentences last only so long, and sooner or later infected prisoners are released. It is vital that the civilian health services be kept

informed of prison conditions, as infected inmates will soon become their patients. Effective control of communicable diseases requires well-developed surveillance systems that can enable resources to be put in place where they will do most good. Reliable surveillance cannot be achieved if a major infection source – the prisons – will not cooperate with the civilian health authorities.

34 In Murmansk Oblast, as in the other regions of north-western Russia, such coordination was introduced only with the international collaboration projects. A central precondition for the Western aid was that the various agencies of the state – in particular, the prison authorities and the civilian health-care service – started to cooperate. In my interviews with representatives of the civilian health-care systems in the region during 2002–03, it was frequently stated that collaboration with the prison authorities would have been unthinkable only a year or two earlier²². My interviewees emphasized that the prison authorities are a prestigious, uniformed federal body of governance, whereas the civilian health authorities are merely subordinate to regional authorities and generally consist of underpaid female doctors. In other words: the prison authorities would most likely have found it beneath their dignity to work together with the civilian health care service – a nuance often missed by Western donors. Nevertheless, donors entering the scene could immediately see the meaninglessness in discharging inmates with active tuberculosis without informing the civilian health-care authorities, or in not coordinating treatment schemes performed by the various Russian tuberculosis services²³. The Western-financed projects offered an arena – or a pretext, so to speak – for changing this situation. In my interviews with representatives of the prison authorities of north-western Russia, most people said that it was high time, and that nothing had happened before due to the ‘mentality’ of their predecessors.

Conclusions

35 Traditionally, Murmansk Oblast has had a heavy military presence and, as a result of its strategic importance, presumably a more than average heavy presence of other power institutions as well. Due to the general compartmentalization of Soviet/Russian politics – and the high prestige of the military and other uniformed services in particular – the Northern Fleet, the military base towns, other military units and the various power ministries have to varying extents been ‘states within the state’ on the Kola Peninsula.

36 The end of the Cold War has changed this situation. While the Northern Fleet has not lost its strategic significance, the division has gradually been relaxed, if it has not disappeared altogether. The military base towns are still closed, but they are no longer secret. The military units have increasingly come to rely on the civilian authorities and enterprises for material support – the adoption campaign of the Northern Fleet’s submarines by Russian cities and companies being a case in point. Moreover, the military and other power institutions have had to accept the ‘invasion’ of the Kola Peninsula by civilian authorities and foreign sponsors keen on solving the environmental problems created during the Soviet period, as well as the new social problems that developed during the economic hardships of the 1990s.

37 The coordination of civilian, military and foreign activities has been most problematic in the nuclear safety sector. This is hardly surprising, since radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel are largely located on military ground. The Northern Fleet has accepted civilian and foreign involvement in the decommissioning of nuclear submarines, but has repeatedly denied foreign experts access to storage sites. Generally, however, such international nuclear safety projects have significantly increased coordination between military and civilian agencies on the Russian side.

38 The inclusion of the Federal Border Service in fisheries enforcement and the prison authorities under the Ministry of Justice in the fight against tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS has been less problematic, although the Border Service was initially not welcomed by the civilian fisheries inspection service. In health care, the situation was apparently the opposite: the female-dominated regional health-care service had not been considered as a ‘suitable’ cooperation partner by the far more prestigious, uniformed prison service under the Ministry of Justice. In both cases, international collaboration ventures provided arenas for initiating coordination

patterns that otherwise might not have evolved. In fisheries enforcement, representatives of the Federal Border Service and the civilian inspection service under the State Committee for Fisheries had the opportunity to get acquainted at the Permanent Committee's regular sessions at secluded hotels in northern Norway. Norwegian experience with coordinating enforcement activities between a civilian Directorate of Fisheries and a military Coast Guard probably also proved useful. In the fight against communicable diseases, the partnership between a power institution and civilian authorities came even more easily, although it might perhaps not have materialized without the intervention of foreign experts. Representatives of the prison health-care services have no good explanation as to why cooperation with civilian health-care officials had not come about earlier, other than the 'mentality' of their old leaders. Seen from this angle, the international projects provided the necessary pretext for concluding partnerships nobody would otherwise have taken the initiative to set up.

39 So, what can we learn from this? First, it should be emphasized that changes in the relationship between civilian and power authorities on the Kola Peninsula are not dramatic, although they have been quite significant in some sectors, notably health care. The closed towns are still closed, and the Northern Fleet is still a world quite unknown to the ordinary citizen of Murmansk Oblast. Second, international collaboration ventures can provide forums for creating new interaction patterns, also between power agencies and civilian authorities. Simply providing the parties with an arena where they can meet and talk, in circumstances different from their everyday life, may sometimes pay off. Third, the barriers to joining forces are in some cases surprisingly low. Occasionally, an international project can be merely the pretext necessary to tip the scales and change a situation that both parties view as senseless.

Endnotes

1 The partnership has a national and a regional tier, formally including several regional entities in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Oblasts and the Republic of Karelia were the original members from the Russian side. Nenets Autonomous Okrug, located on the territory of Arkhangelsk Oblast, became a member in its own right in 1997. The Republic of Komi was included in the collaboration in 2002. The BEAR collaboration at national level includes Denmark, Iceland and the European Commission, in addition to the countries that participate at the regional level.

2 For discussions of the BEAR collaboration, see O.S. Stokke and O. Tunander (eds), *The Barents Region: Cooperation in Arctic Europe*, SAGE Publications, London and Thousand Oaks, CA, 1994; G. Flikke (ed.), *The Barents Region Revisited*, The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), Oslo, 1998. A more recent discussion in Norwegian is found in G. Hønneland, *Barentsbrytninger: norsk nordområdepolitikk etter den kalde krigen* ["Barents Breaking": Norwegian Foreign Policy in the North after the Cold War], Høyskoleforlaget/Norwegian Academic Press, Kristiansand, 2005.

3 The article builds on several years' field studies in Murmansk Oblast. It summarizes findings from studies of various political sectors; more detailed reference to primary data can be found in literature by the author referred to in the endnotes.

4 The largest field so far discovered on the Barents shelf – the Shtokmanovskoe gas and condensate field – is one of the largest offshore gas fields in the world. For a discussion of possible effects of offshore oil and gas development on the regional economy of north-western Russia, see B. Brunstad et al., *Big Oil Playground, Russian Bear Preserve or European Periphery? The Russian Barents Sea Region towards 2015*, Eburon Academic Publishers, Delft, 2004.

5 For a thorough – although no longer quite up-to-date – discussion of civil–military relations in the region, see G. Hønneland and A.K. Jørgensen, *Integration vs. Autonomy: Civil–Military Relations on the Kola Peninsula*, Ashgate, Aldershot and Brookfield, VT, 1999.

6 The ten so-called 'nuclear cities', located mainly in the Ural and Volga regions, were subordinate to the Ministry of Atomic Energy (Minatom) until the 2004 reorganization of Russian federal bureaucracy (under the Ministry of Industry and Energy since then).

7 For further presentations of the ZATO regime, see R.H. Rowland, "Russia's Secret Cities", *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, Vol. 37, #7, Fall 1996, pp. 426–462; G. Brock, "Public

Finance in the ZATO Archipelago”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 50, #6, Fall 1998, pp. 1065–1081.

8 The closed cities of Murmansk Oblast are further presented in G. Hønneland and A.K. Jørgensen, “Closed Cities on the Kola Peninsula: From Autonomy to Integration?”, *Polar Geography*, Vol. 22, #4, Fall 1998, pp. 231–248.

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10 On one occasion, the Governor of Murmansk Oblast promised the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs access to the storage site in Andreyeva Bay. However, the Norwegians soon realized that the Governor was in no position to influence the federal authorities with the remit to make this decision.

11 It is generally assumed that the Northern Fleet uses applications for such joint cruises as an opportunity to legitimize its own existence within the Russian bureaucracy, i.e. to contribute to maintaining the Cold War image of East–West antagonism in the Barents Sea.

12 The enforcement partnership is further discussed in G. Hønneland, “Enforcement Co-operation between Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea Fisheries”, *Ocean Development and International Law*, Vol. 31, #3, Fall 2000, pp. 249–267.

13 A ‘service’ (*sluzhba*) was also an independent federal agency immediately below ministry level. Although often referred to as a ‘military’ agency, the Federal Border Service was not answerable to the Ministry of Defence. In spring 2003, it was incorporated into the Federal Security Service (FSB). For the sake of clarity, the term ‘Federal Border Service’ is maintained in this article.

14 An example is the massive headline on the front page of *Izvestiia* on 12 September 1997: “The Mafia Has Beaten the Fishery Inspection. Can the Border Guard Beat the Mafia?”

15 Finding out how much fish is on board a fishing vessel, for instance, has a purpose only if this information can be compared against what the vessel has reported to fisheries management authorities about its catches. As the situation was in the late 1990s in the Russian part of the Barents Sea, one agency was responsible for inspections in the economic zone – where most fishing activities take place – and another for receiving and processing catch information reported by the vessels themselves. The activities were not coordinated and the information was not shared between the two agencies.

16 For instance, he had to take his issues direct to the Norwegian delegation leader since his own delegation, dominated by people from the ‘fishery complex’, would not accept his views as representing the Russian side; author’s own observations.

17 For a presentation of the most important projects, see G. Hønneland and A. Moe, “Joint Russian–Norwegian Nuclear Safety Initiatives: A Research Note”, *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, Vol. 42, #8, Fall 2001, pp. 615–621. A more comprehensive discussion of the nuclear safety cooperation between Russia and the West in the European North is found in G. Hønneland, *Russia and the West: Environmental Co-operation and Conflict*, Routledge, London and New York, 2003.

18 Until the 2004 reorganization of the federal bureaucracy, the federal radiation safety authority was *Gosatombnadzor*. In connection with the reorganization, this agency was merged with parts of the more general environmental bureaucracy in the Federal Service for Ecological, Technological and Nuclear Surveillance (*Rostekhnadzor*); see G. Hønneland and J.H. Jørgensen, “Federal Environmental Governance and the Russian North”, *Polar Geography*, Vol. 29, #1, Spring 2005, pp. 27–42.

19 They even get new incentives *not* to complete projects as long as the money kept flowing in, it can be argued; see R.G. Darst, *Smokestack Diplomacy: Cooperation and Conflict in East–West Environmental Politics*, MIT Press, Cambridge and London, 2001. For a discussion of ‘the environmental blackmail discourse’ applied to the nuclear safety projects between Norway and Russia, see Hønneland, 2003, *op.cit.* note 17.

20 The Task Force on Communicable Disease Control in the Baltic Sea Region is discussed in G. Hønneland and L. Rowe, *Health as International Politics: Combating Communicable Diseases in the Baltic Sea Region*, Ashgate, Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2004; the Barents Health Programme in G. Hønneland and A. Moe, *Evaluation of the Barents Health Programme: Project Selection and Implementation*, FNI Report 7/2002, the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Lysaker, 2002. East–West collaboration on communicable disease control in the region more

widely is discussed in G. Hønneland and L. Rowe, “Western vs. Post-Soviet Medicine: Fighting Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in North-West Russia and the Baltic States”, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 21, #3, Fall 2005, pp. 395–415.

21 The first Barents Health Programme ran from 1999 to 2003. A new programme has been set up for the period 2004–2007.

22 The interviews were performed together with my colleagues Arild Moe and Lars Rowe for evaluations of the Barents Health Programme and the Task Force on Communicable Disease Control in the Baltic Sea Region; see publications listed in note 20.

23 The lack of coordination of treatment schemes is a main reason for the alarming growth in multi-drug resistant tuberculosis in Russia.

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Abstract

The article discusses how international cooperative projects have contributed to increased interaction between civilian authorities and the military or other power agencies in Murmansk Oblast. The cases of fisheries enforcement, nuclear safety and the fight against communicable diseases, especially tuberculosis in prisons, are reviewed. The main lesson is that international collaboration ventures can sometimes provide arenas for initiating new coordination patterns that would otherwise not have evolved. Occasionally, the international project is simply the pretext necessary for changing a situation that both civilian and power agencies view as irrational. Whether these changes are fundamental and structural, however, remains to be seen.

Keywords : Russia, Regional Authorities, Power Institutions, International Cooperation

Research Fields : Sociology

Countries : Kola Peninsula, Norway, Sweden, Finland