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The motives and interests of non-Arctic states on Arctic development



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Abstract. The article summarizes the work of the Center for Strategic Assessments and Forecasts on the study of strategy and policy of the Arctic Council observer countries. It is proposed in the number of the Arctic Council observer organizations include the Russian Geographical Society — internationally recognized and oldest scientific community, which has made a significant contribution to the development of the Arctic.

Keywords: *Arctic, observer countries, the Arctic Council, the Center for Strategic Assessments and forecasts*

At the turn of 2010—2012 a new center of power actually formed in the international Arctic policy — the group of the Arctic Council observer countries¹. Employees and experts of the Center for Strategic Assessments and forecasts conducted a of the Arctic Council countries-observers. The attempt was made at the expert level to find Arctic strategy, position and motives of activity of each country with observer status [1, p. 8—73].

The following key points were confirmed during progress of work. The issue of the development of deposits located in difficult climatic conditions has become one of the most urgent in the last decades due to climate change on the planet, as well as the exhaustion of easily accessible deposits of hydrocarbons. On the other hand, changes in the geopolitical balance of powers in the world, redistribution of financial, commodity and other flows between East and West at the beginning of the XXI century have made one of the most important also the question of the revision of the strategic transport through passages.

The above mentioned reasons, as well as several other factors led to the fact that the problem of the development of the Arctic, with its impressive resources of raw materials, as well as new transport abilities has become one of the most discussed in the first decade of the XXI century. [2; 3; 4; 5]. Russia's interests in the Arctic, the evaluation of existing partnership institutions in the region, the main lines of the strategies of the foreign states in the Arctic are discussed in the anthology "The Arctic region: problems of international cooperation". [2]

A number of world powers rushed to lay claim to the resources of the region and the region itself as a whole. As V.N. Konishev, M.I. Ryhtik, A.A. Sergunin noted already in 2011: "In the

¹ This problem was described in the research of the Center for Strategic Assessments and forecasts: Strany-nabliudateli v Arkticheskom sovete: pozitsia i motivy deiatel'nosti. M.: ANO, Tsentr strategicheskikh prognozov i otsenok, 2014, 102 p. Funding of the preparation and publication of this work was carried out by the Foundation of Public Diplomacy Support, named after A.M. Gorchakov.

context of enhancing of the geopolitical status of the Arctic, the trend towards re-militarization of the region has appeared. This is reflected in the strengthening of the military presence and activity of a number of countries, as well as NATO in the Arctic; modernization of the armed forces and military infrastructure; the use of armed forces (especially the navies) to defend the economic interests "[6, p. 157].

During a large-scale diplomatic work by the end of the first decade of the XXI century in the Arctic region the international legal framework was formed which let to avoid direct confrontation. With the foundation of the Arctic Council and a number of other institutions, today the international relations in the Arctic are kept to a mutually acceptable dialogue between key polar countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Canada, Russia, USA, Finland, Sweden. These countries are included in the Arctic Council as permanent members and thereby ensured the legitimacy of the organization.

The status of permanent members and achieved relative prosperity in international affairs on the issue of development of the Arctic does not allow these states having more expressed interests in the region, to pursue an active expansionist policy. However, it is clear that the importance of the Arctic is significant that it is not possible to be satisfied only by the achieved status quo and it is necessary to look for other tools that would allow to solve their own problems without disputing about established order of things.

The observer countries in the Arctic Council

According to our estimates, at the moment such a tool is observer countries (currently there are 12). These states which showed their interest in the development of the Arctic, but they are not countries in the region, and according to the rules established by the Arctic countries, they can not claim to its resources. However, they can exert political, economic and other effects on the situation in the region, though not directly, but indirectly — through other areas and other projects. Today observer countries are active players in the international arena. Their interests in the Arctic may often overlap with those of other regions in the world, such crossings can be the subject of a diplomatic game. It should be taken into account that in recent years among the countries-observers China has appeared — it is a rapidly evolving geopolitical center of power, which clearly identified its own interests in the Arctic and is seeking to increase the speed of development of the region by any means.

Conducted analysis of the study shows that today there are independent players (e.g, China), as well as dependant countries (most of the rest of the observer countries) among the countries-observers. They, in turn, can be divided into two groups: those who understand their

own economic benefits from participation in the "Arctic race" and ready to cooperate with stronger players (Singapore, South Korea, Japan and others) and those who are ready to offer their own "Arctic policy" as a tool for stronger partner (Spain, Italy, etc.) or more complex political and diplomatic games.

Multidimensionality and diversity of relations between the parties on the issue of development of the Arctic today raise a number of problems to the Russian foreign institutions, and the Russian Arctic policy will depend on their solutions. Today it is quite clear that it will be very difficult for Russia alone to defend its interests in the Arctic — the opposition from the other participants of the process will be too hard. It is not reasonable to solve most of the problematic issues only within the framework of the Arctic Council today. A number of problems can be discussed in bilateral relations, keeping the balance of interests. In the literature of 2012—2013 before the Ukrainian crisis the issue of the creation of "Arctic twenty" was raised, as about global organization of a new type in order to develop real trust to each other under conditions of emerging multipolarity. In the process of intensification of the struggle for the Arctic area, the Arctic Council is increasingly manifesting itself as apologist of the unipolar world. "In such a difficult situation it seems enough positive to start a constructive dialogue on the creation of a new geopolitical structure — "Arctic twenty" of the major economies of the world, or «International Arctic union» as the organization of a new type of the global scale — AG20» [4, p. 116—117]. The proposed modernization of Arctic managing undoubtedly requires long work and does not involve radicalism.

In these circumstances, it is very important to understand the "balance of powers" and to form new coalitions on the basis of mutually acceptable objectives and tools to achieve them. The study confirmed that the leading country (among the regional states) actively engaged in the study of the capacity of observer countries and options for using it in their own interests, is Norway today. This country is making the active dialogue with Singapore, China, South Korea, trying to bring them to solve a number of issues in their own interests. As the informal coordinator of the policy of the observer countries the role of Poland with the support of Britain and France is denoted.

Problem Arctic issues and concerns

Nowadays the problematic issues actively discussed in expert circles of the regional states, have been clearly determined, and they are also a key topic of the dialogue of the observer countries with the permanent members of the Arctic Council.

Global climate change and the role of them in the polar regions. This topic today dominates in cases when extraregional country is trying to prove the interests in participating of the study of the Arctic region. Climate change and the role of the Arctic in them is almost a safe topic when it is

necessary to solve the issue of access to the management structures in the region. This topic today sounds almost in all the official documents related to the formation of policy of the countries in relation to the Arctic region.

Environmental security in the region. This topic is not less important because it directly connected with the first one. It is very convenient — any attempts of industrial development of the Arctic stumble on issues of environmental security. This is ecology that allows today to take more radical steps if it is necessary to protect or promote someone's interests.

In particular, today the work has been performing to tighten the environmental standards of shipping on the Northern Sea Route (the work has been performing jointly by Norway and Singapore). The main purpose of this work — to accept stringent standards, allowing operation in the Arctic of vessels only built by using the special "green" technology, which offers only a limited number of countries in the region. This allows to solve competition issues rather effectively.

Providing international access to the use of the Northern Sea Route. Despite the fact that the real economic prospects for the active operating of the Northern Sea Route lie in the medium term, already today there is active discussion of the norms and principles on which the Arctic shipping should be based on. The main requirement here is the separation of the interests of the Arctic states (such as Canada and Russia having the largest areas, via which the northern ways go) and the rest of the international community.

Preservation of ecosystems of the indigenous peoples. The topic of indigenous peoples is conditional enough, though, and is effective as it is related to the social aspects and allows to bring to the discussion the entire practice of diplomatic struggle and advocacy on human rights violations.

International law in the Arctic region. The issue of "modernization" of international law in the Arctic region allows to achieve significant priorities for the states holding the main resource, which allows to influence on the formation of new structures and relations in the sphere of international law. First of all, it is USA. However, there are a number of the observer countries, which are also important players — they are Singapore and the United Kingdom. These countries are now engaged in the formation of new approaches to international law in the Arctic.

With regard to the interests of the new members of the Arctic dialogue, then they are following mostly expressed: 1) the use of renewable Arctic marine resources (fishery); 2) access to non-renewable (especially to hydrocarbons) resources of the Arctic shelf; 3) access to the Northern Sea Route. These interests are the same for the majority of countries, and they are the source of the potential conflicts in this respect.

Features of the formation and implementation of the Russian policy in the Arctic

With this in mind and based on the results of the conducted research, it is necessary to take into account the following special aspects in the formation and implementation of the Russian Arctic policy. *The issue of access to the Arctic resources carries a potential of hidden and obvious conflicts.* It is difficult enough for Russia alone to solve arising problematic issues. Due to this reason it is necessary to arrange configurations of new foreign associations and alliances able to consolidate the opportunities of both permanent members of the Arctic Council and observer countries. Realizing that the very institution of the observer countries enables leading players to remain in shadow, keeping status quo, we can expect that the process of accepting of new states as observer countries will go on in the coming years.

Countries of the region for a few years already have been actively forming the corresponding *infrastructure* enable them to prepare scenarios for the political leadership, which makes their steps effective and efficient. In particular, in most countries, industrial and other clusters have been made and successfully work, combining institutions, research organizations and industrial enterprises in order to consolidate the efforts to defend their own interests in the Arctic. For example, in Poland today there is the Arctic consortium, uniting 12 scientific and educational institutions. In Japan a public-private partnership is arranged from the largest shipbuilding companies and government agencies, designed to ensure the country's leadership in the Arctic shipbuilding. This practice must be considered and in Russia, trying not to spray, but to unite and consolidate the resources for the forming, promotion and protection of the Russian interests in the Arctic.

Considering that the Arctic for Russia is the future and due to it, on the background of the highest possible democratic approaches to making international relations in the Arctic, the strictly state position of Russia is to be formed in the issue of the development of the Arctic region.

Conclusion

As one of the results of the work we think correct to recommend the creation of a specialized association or consortium in Russia, which as public organization would unite all the concerned institutions in order to coordinate ongoing Arctic policy.

It is known that besides the observer states there is also Institute of observer organizations in the Arctic Council. It includes in particular the Arctic program of the World Widelife Fund, union of reindeer herders of the North and others.

We consider important to recommend the Russian organizations to the promotion into the Arctic Council observer organizations. Russian Geographical Society is the most promising here, it is internationally recognized as the oldest scientific community having in its line many historical

figures which have made a significant contribution to the development of the Arctic. It is necessary to work and to promote as observer organizations also other Russian and foreign structures, which can be used in the Russian interests in protecting the country's interests in the Arctic region.

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