

## BOOK REVIEW

Review of *The fast-changing Arctic: rethinking security for a warmer world*, edited by Barry Scott Zellen (2013). Calgary, Canada: University of Calgary Press. 395 pp. ISBN 978-1-55238-646-0. (Available for free at <http://uofcpress.com/category/press-catalogue/new-releases.>)

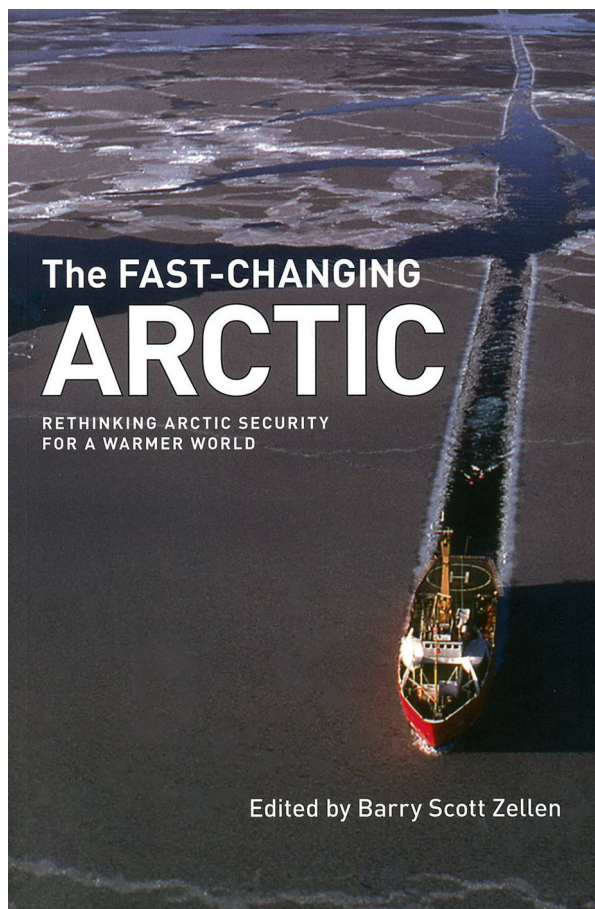
How will the changes currently taking place in the Arctic affect the future nature of interstate relations in the region? To what extent, and how, will the decline in summer and winter sea ice in the Polar Basin lead to changes in the pattern of human activity in the Arctic? How do the Arctic states approach the region and each other, and to what extent are their Arctic strategies compatible? Will the Arctic become an arena of jurisdictional disputes and heightened military tension, or will it become a region of cooperation and prosperity? These are among the core questions addressed in *The fast-changing Arctic: rethinking security for a warmer world*, edited by Barry Scott Zellen.

Barry Zellen is a senior fellow at the Institute of the North, Alaska, where he directs the Fast-Changing Arctic project, which focuses on the geopolitical and other impacts of changes taking place in the circumpolar Arctic. Having worked on related issues since the end of the Cold War, as a journalist, editor and researcher, he has established himself as a prolific writer on Arctic and northern affairs. He is the author or editor of about 10 books and has several more on the way. The current book, which is a 400-page anthology featuring contributions by 20 authors, revisits many of the issues that were raised in Zellen's monograph, *Arctic doom, Arctic boom: the geopolitics of climate change in the Arctic*, published in 2009. At the same time, the current book widens the perspective and adds new dimensions to the analysis. Overall, it makes for an enjoyable read.

The 16 chapters of this book are organized into three main parts, "Arctic climate change: strategic challenges and opportunities", "cooperation and conflict: paths forward" and "regional perspectives". The book also includes a brief foreword by Alaska's Lieutenant Governor, Mead Treadwell, a concluding chapter by the editor ("Stability and security in a post-Arctic world: towards a convergence of indigenous, state, and global interests at the top of the

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world") and an eight-page afterword by University of Alaska professor, Lawson Brigham.

Some matters are better covered than others. In the first part of the book, I would have liked to see a more systematic approach to the topic of "environmental security," maybe also a more detailed discussion of the causal relationship (or lack thereof) between climate change and conflict. While the findings in chapters 3 and 4 are difficult to disagree with, both chapters could have benefited from a more careful examination of the available literature, including the theoretical work by Barry Buzan et al. (1998) on environmental security (not mentioned in Chapter 3), and Idean Salehyan's (2008) article on climate change and conflict (not mentioned in Chapter 4).

The second part, dealing with the topic of "cooperation and conflict," could perhaps have been more coherent. James Manicom's comparative perspective on maritime boundary disputes in the Arctic and East Asia (Chapter 7) is both insightful and intriguing, but he could have

supplemented the discussion of implications for policy-makers in Arctic states with some reflections on whether policy-makers in East Asia might have something to learn from the Arctic coastal states' way of dealing with such issues. In the following chapter, Major Henrik Jedig Jørgensen explores the topic of Arctic multilateral institutions, with a special focus on the Arctic Council. Many of the challenges that he raises in this chapter, such as the absence of a permanent Arctic Council secretariat, have already been addressed, or are at least in the process of being addressed. When it comes to the future role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the Arctic, opinions seem to differ among the US, Canada, Denmark, and Norway. The same goes for the issue of whether or not the NATO–Russia Council could be a potential forum for NATO–Russia dialogue on security issues related to the Arctic. These and other issues could have been addressed more thoroughly (Why and how do opinions differ among the NATO members?).

The third part of the book (“regional perspectives”) is the most comprehensive one. It includes seven chapters, all of which offer relevant and compelling insights. Given that Norway is an important player in the Arctic, and particularly the European Arctic, it would have been natural to also include a chapter on Norway’s High North policy and Norwegian–Russian relations in the Barents Sea region. This topic, and the archipelago of Svalbard, feels somewhat left out. In Chapter 9, Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen discusses the policy perspectives of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland, under the original heading “the High North Atlantic.” Two of the subsequent chapters, by Rob Huebert and Barry Zellen, shed light on the Arctic policy of the United States. The Arctic and maritime policy of Russia is dealt with in chapters by Katarzyna Zysk and Lawson Brigham. Among my favourite chapters are the ones written by P. Whitney Lackenbauer (Chapter 12) and Caitlyn Antrim (Chapter 15), which address, respectively, the Canadian–Russian and the US–Russian relationship in the Arctic.

Lackenbauer argues, and convincingly so, that Canada’s perception of Russia’s Arctic policies and Russia’s perception of Canada’s Arctic policies have more in common than is generally understood. The two greatest Arctic powers—“the bear” and “the beaver”—have in recent years had a tendency to justify their policy moves in the Arctic by referring to what the other allegedly has done, is doing or will be doing: “The Harper government, like the Russians, is trying to project an image of northern resolve. Ironically, both countries accuse the other of militarizing the Arctic agenda. This may represent a classic case of the liberal security dilemma” (p. 272). This is an interesting observation, which deserves the attention of policy-

makers as well as other scholars. By developing some degree of security dilemma sensibility, one can hopefully lower the risk of interstate tensions related to the military or commercial use of the region’s increasingly accessible maritime areas and reduce the likelihood of an incremental militarization driven by “action–reaction” dynamics.

Antrim’s chapter discusses the US–Russian relationship in the Arctic in the context of the (largely failed) “reset.” She introduces the term “the Antimeridianal Arctic,” denoting the area along the 180th meridian, including the maritime area north of the Bering Strait. Based on a discussion of the long-term sources of change in the Arctic (technological, economic, climatic and legal), and an overview of recently adopted US and Russian Arctic policy and strategy documents, she puts together a list of potential US–Russian cooperation areas in the region. In Antrim’s view, the two countries have many interests in common, security interests as well as economic interests, and the potential for increased regional cooperation between Alaska and the Russian Far East is significant.

It should be noted that few, if any, of the chapters—not even the two concluding chapters by Zellen and Brigham—were written specifically for this anthology. Most of the chapters have previously been published elsewhere, in the US Naval Institute’s magazine *Proceedings*, the US Naval Postgraduate School’s *Strategic Insights* and various other research journals. Well-read scholars following current academic debates on Arctic security and the geostrategic implications of climate change may therefore already be familiar with the contents of at least some of the chapters.

That said, I would be surprised if anyone, even those belonging to the authors’ primary target audience, has read all, or even most, of the articles that the chapters are based on. I, for one, had not. Barry Zellen has done a great job in assembling the contributions and presenting them for a wider audience in the form of a highly accessible anthology. The book is well structured, most of the relevant topics and perspectives are represented, and all of the chapters add to our understanding of the increasingly complex dynamics at play in the northern part of the globe.

## References

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