

Foreword

On the 24th of June 2008 in Oslo the research institute Ocean Futures and the Northern Research Forum jointly hosted a very well attended seminar that explored various aspects of Arctic and northern affairs. The seminar was entitled "The Politics of the Eurasian Arctic. National Interests and International Challenges".

Inspired by the attention the Arctic and the northern areas have received in recent years, the seminar itself and the presentations by the four principal speakers are a reflection of at least five distinct but related developments.

First, Arctic and northern regions are seen as potentially substantial suppliers of increasingly scarce resources, especially oil and gas.

Second, the scramble for resources has brought to the surface as never before several unresolved and difficult jurisdictional and sovereignty issues which are or will be subjects of bilateral negotiations and resolution and/or international adjudication.

Third, driven in part by the exploitation of resources, concern for the fragile Arctic and northern environment has raised important questions of conservation and sustainability, including the effects of pollution and global warming that is happening at a faster rate in the Arctic than anywhere else in the world.

Fourth, having been somewhat of a military-strategic backwater after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Arctic and northern areas, and especially the Euro Arctic regions, have again entered the global military-strategic arena as important areas of activity.

Fifth and last, non-Arctic states have increasingly begun to show an interest in the affairs and potential of the Arctic and northern areas. The United Kingdom, for example, has traditionally been active in the north and, now accompanied by the rest of the European Union, has served notice of increased interest in the north. Other distinctly non-Arctic states, such as China, are also on the move in this regard.

The principal speakers at the seminar were:

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| Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, | President of Iceland |
| Lassi Heininen, | Professor, University of Lapland |
| Marit Nybakk, | Member of the Storting of Norway |
| Willy Østreng, | Professor, Ocean Futures |

Jan Magne Markussen
Director, Ocean Futures