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Northern Europe: Security Issues for the 1990s

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This is a shame, for it deserves far better treatment. I recommend it to both the serious student of German naval history and to strategic and force planners.

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Cole, Paul M. and Hart, Douglas M., eds. *Northern Europe: Security Issues for the 1990s*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1986.

At direct glance the book under review would seem to have been overtaken by the current revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe and the USSR. These days a sudden and massive thrust by the Soviet/Warsaw Pact forces across the North German Plain appears unlikely. The still ongoing upheaval in Eastern Europe, combined with the recent outcome of the talks on conventional force reductions in Europe may have made it almost impossible for the Soviets to carry out a sudden and massive *blitzkrieg*-type thrust into Western Europe.

So why is Nato's Northern Flank still worth serious discussion? To this reviewer, the answer is very simple. No matter what the current Soviet military doctrine may be, that country's military capabilities and geopolitical position count the most. The USSR is, and will remain for the foreseeable future, the only country which can obliterate both the United States and everyone else in Nato.

Despite the changes in the military situation in Eastern Europe, Nato's flanks remain vulnerable, particularly in the north. Hence, the importance of the topic chosen by the editors of the book under review.

The aim of the editors and authors was to reassess the security environment in Northern Europe in the light of history, traditions, and regional dynamics. The opening chapter by Arne Brundtland introduces the key issues that affect the policy in the region. Brundtland describes the historical environment that is the foundation of the current security issues. The next three chapters are case studies dealing with Sweden, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Norway.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book is about the Federal Republic of Germany by Heinz von zur Gathen. The author describes in some detail the various strategic aspects of the Baltic Sea in its relation to central and northern Europe. His focus is, however, on the German contribution to the defense of the Baltic Approaches.

In a chapter on Norway's energy security, Charles K. Ebinger and Caroline Verhague explain both the potential and the vulnerability of Norway's energy security. Richard Brody in his chapter on deep-strike technology analyzes the relationship between emerging technologies and the defense of northern Europe. He describes how conventional deep-strike weapons can be used against the Soviet targets in the area and vice versa. The author also deals with the

problem of deploying and using such weapons by both sides.

Carl Bildt provides a summary of changes in the security environment in Northern Europe from a Swedish point of view. He indicates that while everyone agrees that things have changed in Northern Europe, there is some dispute about the extent of these changes and their implications. Bildt focuses his attention on the buildup of the Soviet SSBN/SLBM force in the Arctic waters, and the submarine incursions in Sweden's and Norway's territorial waters. But he also analyzes the problems concerning the energy and legal issues in the Arctic, prospects and problems of arms control, and finally on national defense efforts of various countries in the European north.

Bildt concludes that the strategic importance of Northern Europe will continue to increase in the years ahead for both opposing superpowers. Probably rightly, he thinks that Moscow's ultimate objective is to see the entire area neutralized. This reviewer speculates that despite *glasnost* and the *new thinking* the Soviet notion of neutrality still means neutrality on the Finnish rather than on the Swedish model. But only the future can bear out, or refute, that thought.

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Nielson, J.M. *Armed Forces on a Northern Frontier: The Military in*

Alaska's History, 1867-1987. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988. 298pp.

For many Americans of the "lower 48," Alaska is an intriguing combination of familiar stereotype and unknown reality. A contribution such as *Armed Forces on a Northern Frontier*, which focuses on a locale often taken for granted, yet (unfairly) not often thought about in connection with anything other than dogsled races and oil spills, is a timely and welcome event.

Armed Forces is the product of considerable labor, that appears to be a labor of love—the author's enthusiasm for Alaska is evident throughout. In fact, it is a massive book; the nominal page length of 298 pages, plus acknowledgements and foreword, is inflated by the fact that the book is printed in a tiny 600 words-per-page typeface only slightly larger than that of a telephone directory. *Armed Forces* is packed with detail. For this reason, it is bound to be a valuable tool for anyone researching the subject of Alaska.

Unfortunately, the book does not achieve the author's aim of providing "a usable understanding of Alaska's past as a process of interrelated or connected events, people, and ideas." It delivers a tremendous quantity of facts, but a major cause of its lack of focus is that portions of the book were apparently developed and presented as separate papers. The rationale for the chapter structure is not evident; while chronological ordering is suggested by the title,