The Demilitarization of Kaliningrad: A ‘Sisyphean Task’?

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Extremely militarized during the Cold War, Kaliningrad, from a soviet perspective, was to be a strategic outpost in order to prevent any western attack, to monitor the Baltic republics as well as the southern Baltic Sea, Gdansk and the Vistula estuary. Indeed, this high level of militarization was not only directed against NATO but also served as a possibility to exert pressure on Poland. Kaliningrad, having hosted the Baltic Fleet with roughly 200,000 soldiers, at that time was sealed off to foreigners and even Soviet citizens had limited access. It was akin to a ‘martial sanctuary’, the militaries dominated nearly all aspects. With the end of the Cold war, and without any clear strategic doctrine it lost its military raison d'être. After the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, a lot of troops and military equipment were temporarily based in Kaliningrad in precarious conditions. This caused concern among Poland and the Baltic states. Since the early 1990’s, these countries have been seeking demilitarization of the Kaliningrad region. The reasoning being that a heavy Russian military presence on the shores of the Baltic Sea is not a stabilizing factor, and also handicaps needed economic investments. Kaliningrad’s demilitarization would be vital assistance to the Russian region’s economic growth. Recently, for instance the Lithuanian MEP Laima Andrikienė, argued that “It is almost impossible to find investors to make investments in the region full of the army and arms (…) it is even more difficult to dream of a functioning market economy in such regions.” Ferguson (2005). Based on this perspective, there is still an irrational ‘over militarization’ of the enclave, and only an immediate demilitarization of the region could reduce this negative impact. Nevertheless, the past concentration of excessive forces in the oblast is less perceived as a military threat, and more a troublesome Cold War relic which serves as a bargaining chip for Russia vis-à-vis its Baltic and NATO/EU neighbours.

In this article it is argued that the hope of a Kaliningrad demilitarized,
without necessarily being bound to fail, has been metaphorically like a Sisyphus. At each step in the construction of the project, some new problems and handicaps arise seemingly making the task unmanageable. One of the main reasons of this ‘endless task’ might lie in the consideration of the term demilitarization. The term often evoked, but seldom defined has been misused to the point that it has been strongly debased. The first focus in this article shall try to define comprehensively the word ‘demilitarization’ from a legal and geopolitical perspective. Moreover the strategic literature on Kaliningrad although rich, has only skinned the issue because of a troublesome confusion. The ambiguity coming from the fact that demilitarization is commonly used as the contrary of ‘militarization’ (de facto demilitarization) whereas it has also a legal context in the framework of international law (de jure demilitarization). Secondly, how far do the uncertainties of the strategic vocation of Kaliningrad provide links to the idea that the territory is more and more at the periphery of the Russian mainland.

1. The notion of demilitarization, or the uncertainties of a multifaceted concept

The ambiguities from multiple definitions to the notion of demilitarization that caused an additional issue related to Kaliningrad being allegedly free of nuclear weapons.

1.1 Demilitarization: between de facto and de jure

Demilitarization can be either the process of reduction in the shape of the army or the decrease of certain aspects of all types of military equipments (speaking only about reduction of armed forces is demilitarization). It has been defined by Belgian lawyer Jean Salmon, ‘measure which consists of forbidding on a certain geographic area the presence of military installations and forces, all forms of military exercises or any kind of armament tests. This measure may possibly entail the destruction of military structures’. (Salmon, 2001, pp. 318-319). The most significant difference lies in their motivation. In the first case (de facto demilitarization), one demilitarizes only for economic, strategic, political, etc. reasons (which is easily reversible since there is no binding effect). In the second case (de jure demilitarization), the objective is unambiguous stating that by the purpose is to prevent a given physical area from becoming either the source or the site of armed conflict (which is irreversible since there is a
binding effect). Thus, demilitarization conditions frequently forbid the introduction or maintenance of fortifications, and the presence or increase of armed forces and their equipment, in the given area with the explicit or implicit aim of preventing conflict. To the extent that demilitarization occurs typically by servitude, it is very seldom that a country accepts unilaterally to jeopardize its sovereignty on its territory. It can be noticed that all the de jure demilitarized territories have occurred to the country which has lost the war and of which some parts of its territory have been ‘substracted’ by some disarmament measures. In the case of Russia, the only circumstance where the country had to demilitarize after it has lost a war was after the Crimean War won by French and English: by the Treaty of Paris (1856), Russia was forced to demilitarize the Aland Islands. Other than that, when Finland, Estonia and Latvia got their independence in the aftermath of the 1917 Revolution, their border with Soviet Russia was demilitarized as well. In that case, the disarmament measures on both sides were bilateral.

As it would be highly doubtful that Russia unilaterally demilitarizes Kaliningrad - even if the country were to decide unilaterally to demilitarize, it would be a moratorium without legal value. The only thinkable pattern would have been to set up such zone bilaterally (with NATO) or multilaterally (with Poland and Lithuania).

Since the early 1990’s the issue of demilitarization had arisen periodically in the discourse of some Polish and Lithuanian leaders and was always accompanied by some legal or strategic content on their definition. The first significant plea in favour of demilitarization came from Lithuanian President Brazauskas’ speech on September 28, 1994, at the UN General Assembly. In which, he proposed a round table discussion within the framework of the European Stability Pact on the issue of the Kaliningrad region. The Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vitalij Churkin opposed this proposal. In a letter from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed to the Kaliningrad Duma and signed by him, it says, 'The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is against the proposal raised in Brazauskas’s speech to discuss the issues of the Kaliningrad district at a round table within the framework of the Stability Pact, because its aim is to raise the issue of demilitarisation of the region, and probably even of its status, at an international forum’ (BNS, 1994). The Baltic Assembly, which represents all three Baltic parliaments, adopted on November 13,
1994, a resolution in regards to Kaliningrad. In which it indicated that the future of Kaliningrad is of concern to the whole of Europe. It stressed the necessity of demilitarisation of the region, and proposed an international round table discussion on the issue (Baltic Assembly, 1994). In 1996 a resolution Initiated by Christopher Cox, former Chairman of the Congress Policy Committee, the US House of Representative had adopted similar concerns demanding that Russia withdraws its military forces from the region (Expressing the sense ..., 1994). In the statement of the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry of July 4, 1995 it says that 'American congressmen would hardly be delighted if someone from abroad suggested to demilitarize Alaska, for example' (sic) (ITAR-TASS, 1995).

In a recent episode on September 15, 2005 a crash of a Russian SU-27 fighter which illegally passed into Lithuanian air space, showed that the demilitarization was again a pressing concern. Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs had seized on the SU-27 crash in Lithuania as an opportunity to reaffirm Moscow's proposal for joint airspace monitoring. Also suggesting civilian and military air traffic control by NATO and Russia over the Baltic states, under the aegis of the NATO-Russia Council (NAC) (Socor, 2005). The incident also demonstrated disorder and decay within the Russian military (Russian warplanes shuttling to and from Kaliningrad have been responsible for most of the violations of NATO airspace). From a Russian perspective, the demilitarization (whether it is de jure or de facto) is still not on its agenda. The Baltic countries' accession to NATO has had an adverse effect on the situation in the Baltic region, in fact causing a Russian decrease in confidence. This was the same argument when Poland joined NATO: 'According to the Russian Duma's anti-NATO group, Poland has doubled its military personnel in the region near Kaliningrad since 1994 to 22,000, while Lithuania has concentrated 3,000 troops on their common border. As a reaction to "NATO expansionism" by Poland and Lithuania, Deputy Defence Minister Nikolai Mikhailov told reporters in early December 1998 that troops in the Kaliningrad region would play the role of a "deterrent"' (quoted by Rompkey, 1999).

The only upshot being that all proposals for demilitarization of Kaliningrad have been consistently unclear because none in favour of this have defined 'demilitarization.' Two definitions remain opposite of militarization (this de facto demilitarization does not mean a
comprehensive demilitarization) or a total demilitarization (this \textit{de jure} demilitarization means that there will be no arm at all).

\section*{1.2 The nuclear issue within the concept of demilitarization}

Since the early 1990s, episodically, the issue of nuclear weapons allegedly stocked in Kaliningrad, has been a controversy. This is chiefly because some diehards from Poland and Lithuania argue that the enclave is a nuclear weapon free zone. The vagueness of its nuclear status is, to some extent, comparable to the one related to the demilitarization. Technically, a demilitarized area could be in addition denuclearized, but only if the treaty which states the conditions of demilitarization specifies it as well, and without ambiguity that it concerns nuclear weapons. By the same thought, a denuclearized area does not mean that it is also a demilitarized area. Moreover, none of the nuclear weapon free zones (NWFZ) which have been hitherto set up, are demilitarized. Only national legislation could set up such a zone, in that case, legally, it would be a moratorium.

The idea of a ‘nuclear weapon free Kaliningrad’ intermingled ambiguously with the project of a Nordic NWFZ. While in the late 1980s Gorbachev had pledged to withdraw Soviet nuclear weapons from the Baltic region. Denuclearization of the Russian enclave was first brought into discussion by some vague remarks made at the beginning of the 1990s during discussions between Moscow and Washington. These discussions touched on transferring certain tactical nuclear weapons from other former Warsaw Pact countries to the Russian mainland. According to the rumours, Moscow had chosen Kaliningrad as a place to re-locate these weapons. Poland and the Baltic states were alarmed, especially in view of Moscow’s strident opposition at the time to their plans to join NATO. Opposition had included occasional threats of a retaliatory arms build-up on their borders (not excluding nuclear weapons). Against this background, the \textit{Washington Times} published an article in January 2001 reporting that six months before Russia had transferred some short-range tactical nuclear missiles to the soil of Kaliningrad (Gertz, 2001/Beeston, 2001/Barry, 2001). Polish spokesman immediately called for an international inspection in order to get to the truth (Nougayrede, 2001). Analysts came up with several hypotheses for why the weapons might have been transferred: ranging from an attempt by Kaliningrad’s new Governor Yegorov to assert his authority and the strength of the military
in Kaliningrad, to Moscow’s growing reliance on tactical nuclear weapons in the context of force cuts and restructuring. Another rumour suggested a ploy by Russia to block NATO enlargement, a show of bad temper before an important US missile defence test in July 2000. Perhaps even a provocation organized by US hard-liners in order to highlight the role of NATO as the main guarantee for the European security and to score points during the ongoing US presidential campaign (Delpech, 2001, p. 11). It was well-known, in this context, that the journalist, who wrote the article, Bill Gertz, had strong connections with the Republican Party. Underlining the political impact of the enlargement, US Congressman Benjamin Gilman told the Washington Times: ‘if Russia has, in fact, transferred tactical nuclear weapons to Kaliningrad, we have to view that as an alarming development that threatens the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe (...) These reports underscore the need to promptly enlarge the NATO Alliance to include the previously captive nations of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia’ (Quoted in Huang, 2001).

To this day, the veracity of the accusations is in question because no concrete evidence has ever been brought. In any event, at no stage was Russia acting under any legal obligation for restraint. Kaliningrad is sovereign Russian territory and has never been formally denuclearized. It is true that Gorbachev had pledged to withdraw Soviet nuclear weapons from the Baltic territories (ACR, 1990) in combination with existing Western restraints would make the Baltic a nuclear weapon free zone de facto but not de jure. Meanwhile, on the basis of an exchange of unilateral statements, the United States and Russian Federation have made deep reductions in their arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons. According to the pledges, all categories except one type of air-delivered weapon were to be either eliminated or transferred to central storage facilities while the remaining category was also subject to deep reductions. Russia was supposed to complete activities pursuant to these initiatives by the end of 2000. According to the National Report on the Implementation of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty by the Russian Federation distributed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference on 25 April 2000 (National Report of the Russian Federation …, 2000), implementation of these unilateral obligations were nearing completion.

Was this crisis ado about nothing? Actually, it is notorious that Kaliningrad hosts a tactical (not strategic) nuclear storage site with some
land-based missiles and some nuclear warheads for artillery (SS21). Additionally, as Nilolai Sokov highlights ‘In fact, Tochka missiles according to some reports, have been regularly launched in Kaliningrad Oblast since 1995, including, in 1999, in the presence of representatives of the Lithuanian Consulate in Kaliningrad. The only new factor involved in the 18 April 2000 launch was the use of a different testing range: one closer to the Polish border (previous launches used a testing range closer to Lithuania)’ (Sokov, 2001). Nonetheless, it is true that so far nobody knows if these storage sites are full or empty. From a Russian perspective, this ambiguity can be an asset.

In reality, there are no legally binding agreements on the nuclear-weapon-free status of the Baltic Sea and the adjacent states. Since Gorbachev’s commitments were unilateral, they are not compulsory. The notion of a de jure nuclear weapon free Kaliningrad remains extremely dubious for many reasons. Moscow still sees its enclave as a strategic strong point in the Baltic Sea as it concerns that NATO enlarges further and further. Moreover, Kaliningrad is the only ‘western’ part of Russia that is not subject to the special ‘flank’ restrictions of the CFE Treaty, limiting troop re-deployments. The general international context since 2002, when the US denounced the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, has not been conducive to further breakthroughs in US-Russian nuclear disarmament. Further, President Putin has recently boasted publicly of Russia’s ability to develop new nuclear weapons that can overcome all present defences.

2. The military character of Kaliningrad: a reassuring or troublesome feature?

In the region of Kaliningrad itself, it seems difficult to consider and imagine a demilitarization process; then since its origins, the military character of Kaliningrad as a Soviet (then Russian) territory has printed the socio-economic development and organisation of the region, as well as the mentality of its population.

2.1 The military raison d’etre of Kaliningrad

Before the end of the Second World War, Stalin had been aware of the strategic importance of the all-year round ice-free ports of the former Eastern Prussia (Konigsberg and Pillau), so much so that he asked for
them during his early discussions with the Allies in Tehran, in 1943. The
Northern part of this German province including Konigsberg was hence
awarded to the Soviet Union under the Potsdam Accord in 1945. Immediately after the war, the Soviet Union turned this new territory into
a military zone (renamed in July 1946 Kaliningrad after Kalinin, the
president of the supreme Soviet, who died some weeks before), closed to
foreigners and even to non-resident Soviet-citizens, and dedicated to the
Red Army. The Headquarters of the Baltic Fleet was then transferred
from Leningrad to Kaliningrad, which, with the break-up of the Cold
War became the location of the East/West rivalry. The main strategic
assignment of this military outpost was initially to control the new soviet
influenced zone in Central Europe, it then transformed into a defensive
stance in order to prevent any NATO attack. According to E. Buchhofer,
the entire territory is organised for that purpose; at least 700 km? were
used for military purpose in the region of Kaliningrad (Headquarters and
communication centre are in Kaliningrad, a Navy base and a naval
infantry brigade located in Baltiysk, 5 air and sea bases, 2 missiles sites, as
well as naval logistics installations, weapon stocks and navy schools)
(Buchhofer, 1989, pp. 71-87). The region also harboured the ground and
air forces of the 11th Guards Combined Arms Army. This included: one
tank division, three motorized rifle divisions, three artillery brigades and
attack helicopters. They were deployed mainly in the cities of Kaliningrad,
Baltiysk, Gusev, Tcherniakhovsk and Sovietsk (Frobarth, 2001, pp. 134-
163). Just before the Soviet break up, the total Kaliningrad garrison was
estimated between 100,000 and 120,000 military personnel, including
around 25,000 naval forces. But in reality, most people living in
Kaliningrad (approx. 900,000 inhabitants) were devoted to the
functioning of this military outpost, working as engineers, scientists,
technicians, or non-qualified workers. Even the remaining German
population supported Kaliningrad, before their ultimate expulsion at the
end of 1948 to Germany’s Soviet zone. Leading up to that point the
Germans had been used by the Soviet military administration to restart
the main economic sectors, especially the agriculture, providing the
military with food (Frobarth, 2001).

The Kaliningrad Region made military-oriented sectors a priority
(military-industrial complex, in particular naval construction...), and the
lack of productivity of the agriculture was compensated by the Soviet
economic specialisation. At that time, neighbouring Lithuania was

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Kaliningrad’s main provider of fresh products (milk, meat and vegetables).

Even though Kaliningrad was inhabited by a civil population, the majority of the inhabitants had either family links with the militaries, or worked for the Army or military complex. In that context, the population of Kaliningrad developed a ‘military mentality’. Therefore, when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the 15,000 sq.km Kaliningrad although forgotten by Russia, maintained its military organisation and characteristics. Throughout the 1990’s the population of the enclave continued to favour a heavy military presence in the region, but it was not because the inhabitants harboured aggressive intentions. It stemmed more from the fact that non-defence oriented jobs were scarce, and they depended upon military to make a living (Krickus, 2002, p. 137).

2.2 The military factor: burden or political instrument?

The high level of militarization of Kaliningrad was gradually seen by the region’s authority as a burden for further economic development. The end goal was to acquire more autonomy. The military power seemed incompatible with the then proposed scenario of transforming Kaliningrad into a ‘Baltic Hong Kong’. One initiative led to the implementation of the Yantar Free Economic Zone in 1993. How large is the appeal to potential investors to a heavily armed garrison, where the movement of persons is not totally free?

At the beginning of 1991, the Army denied the regional authority to let foreigners have free access to the whole territory of Kaliningrad. Only the cities of Kaliningrad, Sovietsk and Svetlogorsk were then accessible. Today, Baltiysk, the site of one of the two main Russian naval bases in the Baltic region, is still closed to foreigners and even to non-residents. This situation hinders the development of civil activities that are proposed by the local authority, especially in the tourism sector. The port of Baltiysk, is seen by the Kaliningrad Port Authority, as an appropriate location to receive ferry boats from the neighbouring countries. Yet, the building of a civil wharf in Baltiysk port necessitated ten-year-long negotiations with the military, which refused to share their facilities with civilian activities (passengers and goods traffic) (Sebov, 2003). When they finally agreed in 2003, attempts were made to impede the implementation
of the terminal, and the interconnection with the railway to Kaliningrad city. This was done by refusing the transfer of military lands to the port civilian authority. According to the then Baltic Fleet's commander, Admiral Vladimir Valuyev, these economic interests did not weigh enough in comparison with the growing strategic value of the region, following the membership of the three Baltic states into NATO in 2004 (Konigsberger Express, 2004).

In the early 2000's the prospect of EU and NATO enlargement gave the military in Kaliningrad a new role as an instrument of Russian political influence. The pressure being applied in Kaliningrad towards local authorities, and outwardly towards the NATO and EU newcomers, especially towards the former Soviet Baltic States.

After the East German withdrawal of all its former Warsaw Pact forces from Poland, some Russian air, naval, and ground forces from the Baltic States were relocated to Kaliningrad from 1990 to 1994. This initially stemmed from housing shortages elsewhere in Russia. The image of Kaliningrad as a military bastion was reinforced, as well as the perception of Kaliningrad as a threat by the Baltic Sea's neighbours, especially to Poland and Lithuania. In 1997, the 11th Guards Combined Arms Army was dissolved while the air, ground and sea forces were reunified into a military entity subordinated to the Baltic Fleet, the military district of Kaliningrad was placed under the authority of the district of Leningrad, and a reduction of the ground and naval forces held in the region was announced by the Russian Defence Minister (RFE, 1998). According to the estimations of the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London (The Military Balance 2000-2001) the deployed ground forces in Kaliningrad went from 103,000 in 1993 to 10,500 in 2001. Include the naval, air personnel and the Border Guard, the total military forces can be estimated to some 25,000 men (Oldberg, 2003, pp. 270-285).

Despite the reduction process, the representation of Kaliningrad as military outpost did not disappear at the beginning of the 2000's. On the contrary, it was used inside the region as a political instrument to reaffirm the Russian sovereignty on the enclave at the very moment when it seemed to be threatened by both the EU and NATO enlargement. At the time, Moscow feared the separatist tendencies that could occur with these enlargements. For instance, Sergei Pasko's Baltic Republican Party had
favoured since the end of the 1990’s the creation of an autonomous Baltic Republic associated with the Russian Federation in order to cooperate closer with the EU. Even President Putin’s plenipotentiary representative (Полпред) for the North-western District, Ilya Klebanow proposed during a short visit to Kaliningrad in February 2005 to give the region the status of a ‘foreign territory’. This also included the possibility of introducing the Euro currency there. Moreover, Moscow thought that cooperation with the EU made it necessary to reinforce its power in the region, because it tended to consider every regional initiative vs. the outside world as a breach of the Russian sovereignty. In that sense, the regional Duma’s proposal of allowing EU-citizens to enter the region of Kaliningrad visa-free was totally misperceived by the Russian federal authorities. They feared that this project could weaken Kaliningrad’s links with the Russian Federation, and contribute to a ‘drift’ of the region to the West, or even separatism (Kortunov and A. P. Klemeshchev, 2003).

Under these circumstances, the election of Vladimir Yegorov, the former commander in chief of the Baltic Fleet, as governor of the region in 2000 – supported by the Kremlin – placed a military person to manage civilian affairs. It was seen in Moscow as a way to protect Russia’s security interests, while underlining the prestige of the officers in the region, and perhaps the importance of Kaliningrad’s military character.

On an international level, Russia was very reluctant to accept the NATO enlargement to the Baltic States. Dmitri Trenin wrote, as cited by Krickus (2002), ‘the Baltic States are regarded as a lost part of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union. Baltic independence during the period between the two World Wars, as well as today, is considered the result of temporary weakness of Russia’. Moscow therefore played the card of Kaliningrad, in order to express its opposition to this enlargement. This was perceived as a threat by it’s neighbours because Russia’s government began to consider any demand of demilitarization of Kaliningrad as a breach of its territorial integrity. Some Russian representatives also did not hesitate in warning the Baltic states of a possible change in the reduction process of the armed forces deployed in Kaliningrad. Russia even proceeded with force demonstrations in the region by organising regular military exercises without informing the neighbouring states. In 1999 the largest military exercise organised by Russia for years took place in Kaliningrad. Called Zapad 99 – which meant in Russian ‘West 1999’ – this exercise simulated the retort to a NATO attack on Kaliningrad!
Conclusion:  
the demilitarization of Kaliningrad – a ‘wrong good idea’?

It seems that the issue of the demilitarization of Kaliningrad is intimately connected to some economical considerations. The less Kaliningrad is militarized the more the Russian territory will be a beneficial ‘civilian’ investment. There is also still an underlying hypothesis strongly linked to military arguments. The less Kaliningrad is militarized the less it will jeopardize the security of the countries in its vicinity. The balance between these two assumptions has led more than ever the Russian authorities to consider Kaliningrad as a kind of laboratory for the ‘new’ economical and political ambitions of Russia.

At the crossing point between strategy and geography, in the field of disarmament, the practice of demilitarization is usually chosen either after a conflict or in order to avoid one. It is also strongly linked to the notion of confidence-building. It has an indirect aim to provide confidence-building between a country burdened with the servitudes, and its neighbours. It is possible as well, to build confidence without necessarily demilitarizing. For instance, Lithuania and Russia agreed on bilateral measures reinforcing mutual confidence by establishing verification visits to military forces stationed in Lithuania and in Kaliningrad. This goes beyond the ones foreseen by the CFE Treaty. As the Baltic states are not members of the CFE regime, the bilateral arrangements that have been reached between the Baltic states and Russia are perceived as a substitute of the CFE Treaty regime of verification and transparency. However, as Kaliningrad is henceforth separated from the Russian mainland by a belt of NATO countries, it remains a confidence asset of the Russia. This enclave has been described as a ‘buffer area’, which is designed to reduce risk and/or minimize territorial disputes by obviating direct contact between hostile armies. This is indeed more and more on the political agenda between Russia and NATO.

In addition of this confidence-building vocation, Kaliningrad, and indirectly the Russian Army, is more than ever involved in the defence of the mainland’s economical interests. According to Russian Federation’s Navy doctrine approved (Morskaya doktrina ..., 2001) till 2010 by the Russian President Vladimir Putin in July 2001, the priority regarding the Baltic Sea region is the development of the port infrastructures, the
modernisation of the commercial fleet, the economic cooperation with the bordering states of the Baltic Sea region, and the demarcation of the sea sovereignty. The demarcation is especially because of oil prospecting. In fact, this less military and more economic doctrine conveys Russia’s evolutions as a whole. In January 2001, Vladimir Putin declared in front of his Minister of Foreign Affairs that Russia’s foreign policy ‘must give us the means to focus on the State’s economic and social missions’ (cited in Lynch, 2003). In October 2006, the Russian president announced that the Baltic Fleet will be mobilised to be involved in the security of this submarine infrastructure during the building of the gas pipeline Nord Stream through the Baltic by a Russian-German consortium led by Gazprom.

Indeed, in a context where the sentiment that we have ‘lost the Cold war’ prevails in Moscow, the modernisation of the military tool attests to the Russian determination to show the enclave still constitutes one of the last concrete manifestations of the Second World War, and belongs to the mainland. The idea that Kaliningrad is only dedicated to military purpose is unquestionably over. Indeed, from time to time, in Poland as well as in Lithuania some officials will continue to argue in favour of the demilitarization of Kaliningrad, and in Russia some ‘diehards’ will want to strengthen the military presence in the enclave. Nonetheless, the political elite in Moscow is more and more aware that it becomes pointless to fully utilize Kaliningrad, like in the 1990’s, as a military lever in order to defend its interests in the Baltic sea region. In that sense, if there is a ‘real’ demilitarization of Kaliningrad, it is more in the strategic profile dedicated to the enclave, rather than in the amount of weapons.

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Personal Interview with Gregory Sebov, Director of the Kaliningrad Sea Port Authority in 2003.


1 According to the Greek mythology, as a punishment from the gods for his trickery, Sisyphus was compelled to roll a huge rock up a steep hill, but before he reached the top of the hill the rock always escaped him and he had to begin again. Gods had thought there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor.

2 'Mesure consistant a interdire sur une zone geographique determine la presence de forces et d'installations militaires, toute man?uvre militaire ou l'essai d'armes de toute sorte. Cette mesure peut evaluable entrainer la destruction des ouvrages militaires existants'.

3 'Sa Majeste l?Empereur de toutes les Russies, pour repondre au desir qui lui a ete exprime par Leurs Majestes la Reine de Royaume Uni de la Grande Bretagne et d?Irlande et l?Empereur des Francais, declare que les Iles d?Aland ne seront pas fortifiees, et qu?il n?y sera maintenu ni cree aucun etablissement militaire ou naval'. [His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias (...) declares that the Aland Islands shall not be fortified and that no military or naval establishment shall be maintained or created there]

4 On October 14 1920, the Soviet Russia and Finland signed a Treaty of Peace in Tartu. According to Article 6, Finnish warships over a certain tonnage submarines, and naval aircraft were debarrred from certain coastal waters. Besides, Finland was obliged to demilitarize (the actual words used were 'militarily neutralize') a larger number of small islands in the Gulf of Finland. The 'other' treaty of Tartu, the one signed between Estonia and the Soviet Russia on 2 February 1920, established a 'neutralized' area: the two states committed themselves not to have a quantity of troops exceeding the limit established by the treaty in the eastern part of the Pskov region. The Treaty of Riga (August 11, 1920) between the Soviet Russia and Latvia was largely similar in these respects to the Treaty of Tartu between Soviet Russia and Estonia. It is noteworthy that while all three treaties provided for measures that would clearly fit the definitions given above of demilitarization, they all referred to the process as 'neutralization'.

5 The original idea to create a Nordic Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NNWFZ) dates back to 1957, when the Soviet Prime Minister Bulganin sent a note to the Danish and Norwegian governments stating that if either nation accepted nuclear weapons on its soil it would be considered by Moscow as a casus belli, and meanwhile inviting them to consider the idea of a nuclear free zone in the area. At the time, the latter option was tempting to many people in the Nordic countries. The two neutral countries saw it as an excellent means to reinforce their own active policy of neutrality, while some politicians in Norway and Denmark saw a chance to show their public opinion (which was still reluctant) that it was possible to reconcile belonging to NATO with measures of nuclear disarmament. Moscow, for its part, naturally aimed to weaken NATO by exploiting the long-standing tradition of Nordic pacifism and raising the popular profile of the anti-nuclear cause. The Soviet
Union further hoped that such a NNWFZ would set off a chain reaction in the other small NATO countries where pacifist militancy was strong. All this explains the USA’s equally strong resistance at the time to the zone initiative. For their part, the Nordic countries did see some snags and uncertainties in the Soviet proposals. If the zone was to have a positive strategic effect, they would want it to cover some Soviet territory, but they knew that Moscow would be more than reluctant to accept that idea. It was, in fact, only in June 1981 that Soviet leader Brezhnev stated for the first time that such a zone could incorporate some elements applying to Soviet territory. His successor Andropov stated at Helsinki in June 1983 that a NNWFZ zone could concern the entire Baltic Sea, but his proposition was again immediately rejected by Washington. President Gorbachev’s Murmansk speech of 1 October 1987 relaunched the project of a NNWFZ, including the Baltic Sea and the Norway Sea. Gorbachev had meanwhile also stated that the Soviet Union was going to dismantle all its short and middle range missiles deployed in the area. Nordic countries, where pacifism and anti-nuclear forces were at their climax, were very enthusiastic about his proposals. Nevertheless, the latter remained somewhat woolly and no concrete follow-up actions were taken.

Yantar means amber in Russian, which Kaliningrad holds the world’s largest deposits (90% of the total reserves).


The Baltic States are not yet parties to the CFE Treaty, although all have indicated openness to joining the Adapted version of the Treaty signed in November 1999 as when a larger Russia-West controversy that has delayed its entry into force is resolved. And they are also highly aware of the CFE flank issue and of the implications for their own security. As Estonia and Latvia share a common border with that part of Russia affected by the northern flank limitations, they have followed, with an extreme interest, and an understandable concern, the evolution of Russian build-up in the region. Both these countries considered the CFE Flank Agreement of 1996 as a betrayal of their interests by the NATO parties, since the agreement allowed Russia higher troop ceilings in the Pskov region. See Dunay, 2003/Lachowski, 2002 and Chillaud, 2002.

Russia’s navy plans to expand its Baltic Sea submarine flotilla from three to as many as nine combat submarines during 2007. The expansion follows a cut-back in the number of submarines operated by the Baltic Fleet after the Soviet Union’s 1991 collapse. Of the three subs currently in the fleet, two are in a state of permanent combat readiness. The fourth generation Project 677 Lada submarine can carry up to 18 torpedoes and evade detection by radar. It has a surface speed of 10 knots and travels at 21 knots underwater. The 67-metre (221-foot) long vessel weighs 1,765 tons and can remain underwater for 45 days. See Agence france-presse, ‘Russia to Expand Baltic Submarine Fleet’, 09/15/05 (http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?F=1104824&C=landwar).