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# **The status of Svalbard in relations between the Soviet Union and Norway during the Cold War**

Dmytro Koshovyi

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Modern International and Transnational History,

Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History,

University of Oslo

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## **Preface**

I have always been interested in international relations and when I came to study in Norway there was no longer thought about the topic of the master's thesis. I was interested in examining the relations between Norway and the Soviet Union, part of which during a long time was Ukraine, my home country. A stumbling block in bilateral relationship was the Svalbard issue. This issue remains unresolved. Moreover, the beginning of the XXI century and especially recent years were characterized by a sharp actualization of the Arctic theme in world politics. Therefore, it seems to me that this is an important task to research the past in order to be able to better understand the present and try to predict the future.

I would like to thank my supervisor Daniel Maul for helping me write this master's thesis. I deeply appreciate the help that he provided, and I sincerely respect him.

I would also like to say warm thanks to Maria Fedenko and Tony Wai On Yam for their help and support during my writing of this paper.

I dedicate my master's thesis to my parents-historians, whose professional path I have also chosen in my life.

## **Abstract**

Russia and Norway have a long tradition of exploring the Arctic. Their paths regularly cross both in the polar sea and on the Arctic islands. Svalbard has long been a no man's land - "terra nullius".

On February 9, 1920, representatives of Great Britain, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the USA, France, Sweden, Japan, and the five English dominions and colonies signed the Svalbard Treaty in Paris. Under the Treaty of 1920, Svalbard is the only land state territory of common use in modern international law. Norway was able to obtain sovereignty over the territory of Svalbard in the Arctic region but was deprived of certain sovereign rights. The Svalbard treaty prohibits Norway from setting up military bases and using the Svalbard archipelago for military purposes, but it establishes that foreign citizens have the same commercial rights as Norwegians.

This master's thesis will try to demonstrate the relationship between Norway and the Soviet Union around the Svalbard issue during World War II and throughout the Cold War. It was during those periods when disagreements between countries over the use of this archipelago had begun.

The master's thesis will describe all the negotiations about Svalbard between the two countries. An important part of this thesis will be the description of Norway's special policy - "bridge-building", the aim to create good relations with both the West and the East. Norway was territorially between two opposing ideological opponents. This research will provide a description of all transformations in relations between Norway and the countries of the West and the East. In addition, it will examine how Norway's foreign policy has changed and how Norway has become a member of NATO and how it has affected relations with the Soviet Union regarding Svalbard. A series of crisis between Norway and the USSR will be described, of which these situations arose the question of Svalbard during the Cold War.

## Introduction

In 1905, the Swedish-Norwegian Union was put to an end; the sovereign kingdom of Norway was formed on the map. Norway tried to establish itself in the foreign policy arena and was guided by the doctrine of the so-called "Arctic imperialism".<sup>1</sup> The issue of state ownership of 61 thousand square kilometers of land in the Arctic Ocean - and this is a fifth of the territory of Norway plus fish-rich water area - has arisen on the agenda. During the conferences in 1910, 1912, 1914, Svalbard managed to defend the status of "terra nullius", the last of the planned conferences, which were supposed to begin on February 1, 1915, were disrupted by the First World War.

The Svalbard Treaty of 1920 (Paris) was intended to eliminate the contradictions of all interested countries around the rights to the Svalbard (Spitsbergen) archipelago and to exclude it from the list of problematic issues on the international agenda. The regime and status assigned to Svalbard under this treaty have become a unique phenomenon in the international legal practice of those years. However, in the context of Soviet Union -Norwegian relations, some provisions over the time of the Treaty have turned into «pain points».

After the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris on February 9, 1920, the Russian Soviet Government officially declared that it did not recognize it as legally binding for itself, since its representatives were not allowed to discuss, and signed the document. The Russian Soviet government declared that it does not recognize itself bound by this act.<sup>2</sup>

In its negotiations with Norway, the Soviet Union has repeatedly raised the issue of sharing Svalbard's territory to ensure the defense of the island. The superpower also wanted to make similar changes to the treaty both during the Second World War and at the dawn of the Cold War.

The Arctic as a whole was strategically very important for both countries. For the Soviet Union, it was especially important to use Spitsbergen and the Arctic as a whole as a zone of operation for nuclear submarines of the Northern Fleet and military intelligence. For NATO, the same region was important for keeping the Soviet Union under control and protecting Europe from

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1 Riste, Olav. *Istorija vneshnej politiki Norvegii (Norway's Foreign Relations: A History)* /trans. from English M., 2003. S. 114–115

2 Nota pravitel'stva RSFSR pravitel'stvu Norvegii o zakljuchenii Parizhskogo dogovora o Shpicbergene (Note of the Government of the RSFSR to the Government of Norway on the conclusion of the Paris Treaty of Svalbard), February 12, 1920. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.35

the North. However, Spitsbergen was largely saved from military activities. It was in the interests of both Norway / NATO and the Soviet Union. This goal was served by the post-war "bridge-building" policy of Norway. In its foreign policy, Norway wanted to act as a natural bridge in the political and economic relations between the West and the East, given its territorial location. Such a foreign policy satisfied the aspirations of various foreign policy preferences of various social groups in Norway - supporters of a pro-Western orientation, adherents of cooperation with the USSR, adherents of Scandinavian integration and neutralists.

However, by 1949, a stable picture of the Soviet Union as a real military and political threat was emerging in the Norwegian political environment and society, with which a clash was inevitable. In this context, at the time Norway joined NATO in April 1949, Spitsbergen was seen as one of the links in the first line of defense against Soviet submarines seeking to enter the operational expanse of the Atlantic and to cut the main lines of communication between Europe and North America.<sup>3</sup> In 1951 Svalbard was included in the NATO defense zone.

During the 1950s and 1960s, relations between the Soviet Union and Norway on Svalbard did not experience significant shocks, but in the late 1970s, they again entered a period of disagreement. There were only a few problems that represented a real burden on the relationship: for example, The European Space Research Organization (ESRO) radars (1967-74), and an air crash in Hopen Island (1978).

The emphasis of my thesis is on the disputes between Norway and Russia concerning the status of Svalbard during World War II and the Cold War. My goal is to examine how the relationship between the two countries has evolved during the Second World War and the Cold War.

A number of factors will be considered in the master's thesis, which directly played a role in this relationship. *First*, it is a factor of ideology (culture), since countries are in different political blocks and therefore have completely different goals, which they trace in the Arctic region. *Secondly*, the security factor in the Arctic region is a topic that is on the agenda in the first place and to this day. *Thirdly*, it is important to trace how the geographical factor influenced relations between countries - a factor of geopolitics (favorable territorial position, availability of natural resources in the Svalbard archipelago and at sea). *Fourth*, economic factors will be considered, which include fishing and mining of coal at archipelago, and oil at the sea shelf. It is important to clarify that these factors do not exist in isolation but are closely intertwined.

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<sup>3</sup> Hjalp Norge med offensive planer mot Sovjet. // Aftenbladet. URL: <https://www.aftenbladet.no/innenriks/i/yVRax/Hjalp-Norge-med-offensive-planer-mot-Sovjet>

### *Theory and methodology*

My research will be based on a study of the political and legal status of Svalbard, the economic and political interests of Norway and the Soviet Union in the Arctic, and the security issue in the region. The theoretical basis for my research covers the diplomatic history and the history of international relations.

The comparative historical research method will be used to compare how the relationship between the two countries has been associated with the problem of Svalbard in World War II, the beginning of the Cold War and after its end. It is important, since the main actors were in different political blocs (Soviet and NATO), and consequently the countries conducted their foreign policy on the basis of different ideological bases. This research will be based on working with archival documents of the Soviet Union and Norway in order to trace the dynamics of relations between the two countries during the Cold War in the most objective way.

This study uses a qualitative content analysis approach to explore the impact of geopolitics on the question around Svalbard. The use of this method is necessary to show how the geographical factor affects the relations between the two countries. Thus, it will be considered the influence of a favorable geographical position (the problem of Arctic security), the coastline, the territory of the archipelago and the sea shelf, rich in natural resources.

### *Scholarly debate*

Among the scholars who considered the dispute over rights in the areas adjacent to Svalbard, many of them stressed the influence of political factors. In addition, the economic factor (energy interests) is also indicated. An important part of the debate is played by the role of military-strategic capabilities. In this area, the vital interests of several states are at stake. For the Soviet Union, this territory was important, because it was directly in the reach of the US (for launching missiles across the North Pole and for passing ships and submarines). For Norway, this territory was important because of its use in the event of hostilities with the Soviet Union (the possibility of actions in the Barents Sea).

The analysis of works presented by the Norwegian historians indicates that they have a reliance on a more than redundant source base. The widespread use of the theory of "political realism" in the analysis of international relations, characterized by the absence of claims to consider any problems in the long-term context. That positions most of the works in the status of "case studies", explaining individual events or particular problems from the point of view of existing theories.

Sven Gabriel Holtsmark is a Norwegian professor of history and head of the Department of Defense Studies. S.G. Holtsmark can be recognized as a leading Norwegian specialist in the history of political relations between the USSR and Norway. He developed such problems as the views of the Soviet Union on the political integration of the countries of Northern Europe, the importance of Norway for the foreign policy of the USSR, the impact of "Russophobia" on Norwegian politics, the place and role of Spitsbergen in relations between the two countries. The author describes in detail the Soviet initiatives on Spitsbergen in 1944-1947, clumsy attempts to propose a non-aggression pact, as well as the negative attitude of the USSR to the development of cooperation between the Nordic countries. These actions influenced the formation of the Norwegian security policy, prompting it to cooperate with the West. It should be noted that the dignity of the work of S. Holtsmark and his followers is the widespread use of materials from the Soviet archives.<sup>4</sup>

Important to the master thesis are the researches of Helge Pharo, who most fully investigated the issues of the economic integration of Norway with the countries of the West. Helge Øystein Pharo is a Norwegian historian and professor of international history at the University of Oslo. He proved the key role of the Marshall Plan in curtailing the bridge-building policy in the second half of the 1940s and an analysis of the economic aspects of Norway's "Atlantic cooperation" after its entry into NATO.<sup>5</sup>

The representative of the new researchers is Kristian Åtland. Since 2002, he has worked as a research fellow at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI). He has published a number of articles, research reports, and book chapters on various Russia-related topics. "Cold War Legacies in Russia's Svalbard Policy", the joint publication together with another Norwegian historian Torbjørn Pedersen, concluded that Russia's Svalbard policy in the post-Cold War period features a number of similarities with Soviet Union's Svalbard policy (demilitarization status, mining and fishing rights in the region).<sup>6</sup>

Soviet historiography investigated a narrow range of problems of interstate relations between the USSR and Norway in the second half of the 20th century. It is important to note that there are practically no Soviet studies of the relationship between the two countries. Such studies began to appear only after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the activities

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4 Holtsmark, Sven Gabriel. 1988. Between "russophobia and bridge-building": The Norwegian government and the Soviet Union. Report, Institutt for forsvarsstudier

5 Pharo, Helge. "Together Again: Anglo-Norwegian Relations and the Early Cold War." *Scandinavian Journal of History* 37, no. 2 (2012): 261-77

6 Åtland, Kristian, and Torbjørn Pedersen. *Cold War Legacies in Russia's Svalbard Policy*. London: Routledge, 2014. 20.



of Russian historians and political scientists. Most of the work was based on an analysis of modern relations between Norway and Russia and gave only a brief overview of the events of the last century, of which they were part of these relations.

An important source for research is the collection of documents "Soviet-Norwegian Relations. 1917-1955". This collection of documents on the relations between the USSR and Norway in the years 1917-1955 is the result of the initiative of A. Chubaryan, Director of the Institute of Universal History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and Professor O. Riste, Director of the Norwegian Institute of Defense Studies. During their discussions in 1991, the idea of a joint project to study the history of relations between the two countries after the revolution of 1917 arose. The declassification of documents from Russian archives created favorable conditions for the implementation of the project. After the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Norway and Russia expressed their support for this idea, a formal agreement was developed and signed at the meeting of the heads of the two institutions in February 1992. In accordance with this agreement, the directors of both institutions co-chaired the editorial board of the collection of sources. It included 384 documents on relations between the two countries, with notes on the conversations of foreign ministers of the two countries, their letters, notes of embassies, and memoranda. To a larger extent, this collection of documents has been used for the analysis of the original sources of relations between Norway and the Soviet Union from the beginning of the Cold War until 1955.

## **1. The legal status of Svalbard during the Cold War.**

This chapter will examine the role and importance of the Norwegian territories in the context of global military and political processes in the first half of the 1940s. Territorial aspects were embodied in issues such as the provision of ports to the Soviet Union in Northern Norway and the revision of the status of the Spitsbergen archipelago in 1944. In addition, relations between the countries on the issue of joint defense of Svalbard, as well as a revision of the Svalbard Treaty of 1920 will be examined.

This chapter will also focus on the key processes in the development of Norwegian foreign policy, which determined the course and content of Soviet-Norwegian relations in the post-war years. The emphasis will be on the Norwegian “bridge-building” policy and its impact on relations with the Soviet Union. It will be also investigated the reasons for the transformation of Norway’s foreign policy from a “bridge-building” policy to Norway’s desire for an alliance with Western countries.

## 1.1 The desire to review the status of the archipelago by the Soviet Union during the Second World War.

Before World War II, Svalbard was considered mainly as an economic object in Soviet foreign policy, and the strategic side of the matter was hardly taken into account. Having consolidated its presence on the archipelago through the active mining of coal, which had been conducted by the «Arktikugol» trust since 1931, the Soviet side in its pre-war years made no attempt to change the international legal status of Spitsbergen. The beginning of the Second World War brought to the fore the colossal military-strategic importance of Svalbard. The transformation of Norway into a satellite of Nazi Germany was reflected in the archipelago.

In a letter from the Consul of the USSR in Oslo, N. D. Kuznetsov, to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov and his deputy S. A. Lozovsky on August 28, 1940, on military measures and the occupation policy of the German authorities in Norway, in particular, it was noted: “The press quietly slipped the message that the Germans showed great interest in Svalbard and Bear Island.”<sup>7</sup>

Despite the desire of part of the political elite to “occupy the archipelago by the forces of the Red Army for the entire time of the war and the period of complete normalization of international relations”<sup>8</sup>, such proposals did not find support from the highest Soviet leadership, who adhered to the former principle of domestic diplomacy regarding the archipelago - its demilitarization.

After the start of World War II, the situation changed radically. The favorable strategic location of the archipelago could not fail to attract the attention of the warring parties. The archipelago could become the base from which the naval forces and aviation would be able to control the transportation of goods in the northern seas. The new situation called into question the

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7 Pis'mo konsula SSSR v Oslo N. D. Kuznetsova narodnomu komissaru inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovu i zamestitelju narkoma inostrannyh del S. A. Lozovskomu o voennyh meroprijatijah i okkupacionnoj politike germanskih vlastej v Norvegii (A letter from the USSR Consul in Oslo, N. D. Kuznetsov, to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. M. Molotov and Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs S. A. Lozovsky about military activities and the occupation policy of the German authorities in Norway), August 28, 194. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 304

8 Zapiska ispolnyayushchego obyazannosti zaveduyushchego Otdelom skandinavskih stran Narodnogo komissariata inostrannyh del SSSR P. D. Orlova zamestitelyu narodnogo komissara inostrannyh del SSSR S. A. Lozovskomu o merah predotvrashcheniyu zahvata arhipelaga Shpicbergen Germaniej (Note by P. D. Orlov, Acting Head of the Scandinavian Countries Department of the USSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, S. A. Lozovsky, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, on measures to prevent the capture of the Spitsbergen archipelago by Germany), August 3, 1940. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.302

expediency of preserving the demilitarized status of the archipelago, which was set out in Article 9 of the Treaty of 1920, according to which “Norway undertakes not to create nor to allow the establishment of any naval base in the territories specified in Article 1 and not to construct any fortification in the said territories, which may never be used for warlike purposes.”<sup>9</sup>

The main interested party in the military potential of Spitsbergen was the USSR. To this, the Soviet Union had an important reason, which Jørgen Holten Jørgensen singled out in his study of Soviet politics about Svalbard. The problem is that the Soviet Union, which has the longest coastline in the world, does not have free access to the oceans. The author indicated that the access to the fleet of the Soviet Union to the Pacific Ocean is complicated by ice layers, the path from the Black Sea passes through the Bosphorus and Gibraltar, and the fleet of the Baltic Sea must pass through the Oresund to reach the high seas.<sup>10</sup> The hostilities during World War II showed how important it is to have control over the area around Svalbard for being able to be both safe and to have the opportunity to attack from there.

For the first time, the Soviet Union raised the question of Spitsbergen in July 1941 through its ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky.<sup>11</sup> The Soviet side proposed to the British government to organize a joint occupation of the archipelago in order to avoid the creation of naval bases and hydrometeorological stations of Nazi Germany on it. At that time, the Norwegian exile government was in London, but the proposal was directed only to the British side, since the Soviet Union at that time did not recognize Norway as a sovereign state, despite the fact that the Norwegians continued to conduct military operations from London.<sup>12</sup> The decision to end diplomatic relations between the USSR and the Norwegian government was communicated in the form of a note verbale by the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR as early as May 8, 1941.<sup>13</sup>

Norwegian historiography does not indicate exactly what the relations between the USSR and the Norwegian government were. It is said about ignoring Norwegian interests and Norway, but

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9 Article 9 of the Svalbard Treaty <https://app.uio.no/ub/ujur/oversatte-lover/data/lov-19250717-011-eng.pdf>

10 Jørgen Holten Jørgensen, *Russisk Svalbardpolitikk*, p. 28

11 Barros J. Trygve Lie: *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* // *International Journal*. Vol. 25, N 2. 1970., p. 411

12 Trygve Mathisen, *Svalbard in the changing Arctic*, Oslo 1954, p. 33

13 Verbal'naja nota NKID SSSR missii Norvegii v SSSR o prekrashhenii diplomaticheskikh otnoshenij mezhdru SSSR i norvezhskim pravitel'stvom (A note verbale to the NKID USSR of the Norwegian Mission to the USSR on the termination of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the Norwegian government), May 8, 1941. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 308

this is not the whole truth<sup>14</sup>. Indeed, after the decision to end diplomatic relations between the two countries, USSR conducted negotiations with Great Britain instead while the Norwegian representatives were bypassed though they were about the interests of Norway. On July 15, 1941, the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. Molotov held a conversation with British Ambassador to the USSR, S. Cripps, about plans for joint operations by the Allies at the North of Norway. On July 15, 1941, the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. Molotov held a conversation with British Ambassador to the USSR, S. Cripps, about plans for joint operations by the Allies at the North of Norway. "The Soviet government proposes to the British government, by joint actions of both the aviation and naval forces of England and the USSR, with the participation of the Soviet ground forces, create in Kirkenes-Petsamo-Murmansk a common front for action against Germany."<sup>15</sup> This operation took place later, from October 7 to November 1, 1944, and was named the Petsamo-Kirkenes operation. It was carried out with the participation of the Karelian Front and the Northern Fleet of the USSR Navy against troops of Wehrmacht without the support of Norway or Great Britain. At the same meeting, the question about the seizure of the island of Spitsbergen and Medvezhiy (Norwegian: Bjørnøya) was raised by joint forces with Great Britain to create air and sea bases on these islands. According to Molotov, "The organization of such bases will ensure the creation of a reliable path between the USSR and Britain as well as between the USSR and the USA"<sup>16</sup>, as there was a threat to lose such paths that were by that time only through Vladivostok because they could be blockaded by the Japanese.<sup>17</sup> However, the Norwegian government in exile intervened in the consultation, and stated that Svalbard was still under the sovereignty of Norway and only it had the legitimate right to determine the further development of the region. Maysky, in his turn, assured that the Soviet Union did not make any territorial claims to Norway and respected its sovereignty over the archipelago.

Thus, in the summer of 1941, there was a prospect of joint actions by the Soviet, British and Norwegian sides with respect to Svalbard. All parties agreed with the proposed action plans.

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14 Trygve Mathisen, *Svalbard in the changing Arctic*, Oslo 1954, p. 34

15 Zapis' besedy narodnogo komissara inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotova s poslom Velikobritanii v SSSR S. Krippsom o planah sovместnyh operacij sojuznikov na Severe (Record of the conversation of the USSR Foreign Affairs Commissar V. M. Molotov with the British Ambassador to the USSR S. Cripps about plans for joint operations of the allies in the North), July 15, 1941. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.309

16 Zapis' besedy narodnogo komissara inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotova s poslom Velikobritanii v SSSR S. Krippsom o planah sovместnyh operacij sojuznikov na Severe (Record of the conversation of the USSR Foreign Affairs Commissar V. M. Molotov with the British Ambassador to the USSR S. Cripps about plans for joint operations of the allies in the North), July 15, 1941. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.309

17 Trygve Mathisen, *Svalbard in the changing Arctic*, Oslo 1954, p. 35

But the events on the Soviet-German front in the fall of 1941 prevented the implementation of these agreements regarding the military operation on Spitsbergen. Nevertheless, the main ideas of these agreements were then implemented in the course of events on the archipelago already in 1941.

Fearing the threat of Germans' emergence in the area of Soviet villages (such as the Pyramiden, Barentsburg and Grumant) on Spitsbergen, the mine management developed a system of necessary actions for this case. Detachments to which the available weapons were distributed were also created in each village. Detailed evacuation plans for each mine were developed as well. But coal mining continued until August 23, 1941. After the German had attacked on the Soviet Union in 1941, almost all the inhabitants of Spitsbergen were evacuated either to the Soviet Union or to the UK.<sup>18</sup> The evacuation took place on August 25, 1941, when an English squadron entered the Isfjord with 10 warships, auxiliary vessels, and military vehicles under the command of Rear-Admiral Vian. The Soviet people were evacuated by the British squadron to Arkhangelsk, where they arrived on August 31, 1941.<sup>19</sup> A total of 1953 people were evacuated, including women and children from the Soviet villages. During the evacuation operation, the mines were piled up, and the stored coal mined was set on fire, despite the protests by the director of the Norwegian Svalbard coal company (the Store Norske Spitsbergen Kullkompani), E. Sverdrup. This was done so that the extracted coal would not go to the Germans if they landed on the archipelago. Mine equipment was also destroyed.<sup>20</sup> After the evacuation of Soviet miners and their families, 932 Norwegians were also evacuated to the British territory by the same British warships after their return from Soviet Arkhangelsk.

In 1941, German troops landed on Svalbard. Gnilorybov pointed out: "The emptied polar archipelago was practically completely controlled by the German command by autumn 1941. Temporary alternate aerodromes were built on the archipelago and Medvezhiy Island (Bjørnøya). German submarines were sheltering in Svalbard fjords. Meteorological and radio stations were installed on many islands of the archipelago. Between 1941 and 1945, the Nazis sent about 10 expeditions to Svalbard."<sup>21</sup>

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18 Fridtjof Eeg-Henriksen, Erik Sjømæling, Dette er Svalbard 2016. Hva tallene forteller, Statistisk sentralbyrå, desember 2016, p. 3 - [https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/\\_attachment/286987?\\_ts=158ded82100](https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/286987?_ts=158ded82100)

19 Pechurov L.V. Arhipelag Shpicbergen: boi strategicheskogo znachenija (Svalbard archipelago: fights of strategic importance). // "Voenno-istoricheskij zhurnal" ("Military History Journal"), 1995, No. 1, p. 14

20 Trygve Mathisen, Svalbard in the changing Arctic, Oslo 1954, p. 38

21 Nikolay Gnilorybov, Ugol'nye shahty na Shpicbergene (Coal mines on Spitsbergen), Moscow, p 46

Thus, the events between 1941 and 1945 showed that in wartime international agreements do not guarantee compliance with the status of a demilitarized zone for the Svalbard archipelago, where it is extremely important for controlling sea routes off the northern shores of Europe. Since that wartime, the military-strategic importance of the archipelago has become dominant for the Soviet side in the question of Spitsbergen. In between 1944–1945, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, V. M. Molotov, has repeatedly noted that “for the Soviet Union and its security in the North, that exit to the ocean in the west that goes past Svalbard is of utmost importance.”<sup>22</sup> The possibility of militarizing the archipelago was not only hostile to the USSR, but also against Oslo's will. Moscow's concern can be understood. Based on previous experience of the war, the country's leadership realized its strengths in defense and weaknesses in offence. Therefore, militarization of the region could not be an option in the future but was once considered by the Soviet leadership.

Despite repeated statements by King Haakon VII and his ministers to support the Soviet Union in the fight against Germany, the Norwegian émigré government was cautious about a possible alliance with Moscow. Norwegian leaders considered mutual trust between the Atlantic powers and Soviet Russia a prerequisite for such cooperation.<sup>23</sup>

This was explained by the fact that the Norwegian leaders were guided by an alliance with Western countries in ensuring their security. In particular, this was directly stated by the Norwegian Minister of Finance P.E.W. Hartmann: “We have seen from our own experience that neutrality, which used to be the basis of Norway's foreign policy, is unable to protect us from attack”.<sup>24</sup>

The memorandum of “The main directions of the foreign policy of Norway”, which was adopted at a meeting of the Norwegian government in London on May 8, 1942, stated: “Our

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22 Zapis' besedy narodnogo komissara inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotova s poslom Norvegii v SSSR R. O. Andvordom o sovместnoj oborone Shpicbergena i o-va Medvezhij (Record of the conversation of the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR V.M. Molotov with the Norwegian Ambassador to the USSR R.O. Andvord about the joint defense of Svalbard and Bear Island), January 29, 1945. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.373

23 Memorandum «Osnovnye napravlenija vneshnej politiki Norvegii» ("The main directions of the foreign policy of Norway»), May 8, 1942. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.324

24 Zapis' besedy ministra finansov Norvegii P. E. W. Hartmanna s poslom SSSR pri sojuznyh pravitel'stvah v Londone A. E. Bogomolovym o sovetsko-novezhskih otnoshenijah (Record of the conversation between the Minister of Finance of Norway P.E. W. Hartmann and the Ambassador of the USSR to the Allied Governments in London A.E. Bogomolov about Soviet-Novye relations ), London, April 12, 1943. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.330

main problem militarily is the defense of our long and vast coast, and we can provide its necessary defense only in cooperation with the great Atlantic powers”<sup>25</sup>. At the same time, this government believed that “if there are friendship and cooperation between Soviet Russia and the Western powers, the Soviet government will be interested in strengthening the defense of Northern Norway and will react positively to this.”<sup>26</sup> This memorandum emphasized that “Soviet Russia never made any [territorial] claims against Norway and throughout the war was sympathetic to our struggle for freedom”<sup>27</sup>. On the other hand, however, the United States, a major rival of Soviet Union, was willing to conduct negotiations with the Norwegian authorities on the Soviet participations in the affairs of northern Norway. In 1943, when Trygve Halvdan Lie, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, was on a trip to Washington, the U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had a conversation with him about the search for a compromise in relations between Norway and the Soviet Union. In particular, they discussed the possibility of the USSR using Narvik during the war as a port for their ships.<sup>28</sup> This issue, as the issue of Svalbard, was considered by Norway as interference into the internal affairs of the country and no longer came to the agenda until the end of the war.

In March 1944, T. Lie made a request through the USSR ambassador V. Z. Lebedev to the Soviet government about the possibility of “using Norwegian military units on Russian territory” and received a positive answer.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the Norwegian leaders considered, albeit with reservations, a possible and desirable interaction with the USSR in matters of ensuring security in the North of Europe.

In the light of all the above and accumulated real experience in protecting the archipelago, the steps of diplomats made between 1944 and early 1945 appeared logical.

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25 Memorandum «Osnovnye napravlenija vneshnej politiki Norvegii» ("The main directions of the foreign policy of Norway»), May 8, 1942. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.322

26 Memorandum «Osnovnye napravlenija vneshnej politiki Norvegii» ("The main directions of the foreign policy of Norway»), May 8, 1942. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.323

27 Ibid., p.323

28 Philip M. Burgess, *Elite Images and Foreign Policy Outcomes. A study of Norway*, p. 63

29 Zapis' besedy ministra inostrannyh del Norvegii T. Li s poslom SSSR pri sojuznyh pravitel'stvah v Londone V. Z. Lebedevym o vozmozhnom razmeshhenii norvezhskih vojsk v SSSR (Record of the conversation between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway T. Lie and the Ambassador of the USSR to the Allied Governments in London V.Z. Lebedev about the possible deployment of Norwegian troops in the USSR ), March 8, 1944. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.340



On November 14, 1944, V. G. Dekanozov, the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, presented to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov a note "On the Question of Svalbard and the Bear Island". He proposed to agree with the Norwegian government "that the USSR should have the right, if he considers it necessary, to organize one or more naval and air bases on the Spitsbergen archipelago itself", as well as "on the organization on the Bear Island of the Soviet naval base, designed to protect our rights in Svalbard and to ensure the safety of navigation of Soviet vessels of the Northern Fleet."<sup>30</sup>

On November 12, 1944, V.M. Molotov, in an interview with T. Lie, proposed to revise the Paris Treaty of Svalbard and establishing the Soviet-Norwegian condominium.<sup>31</sup>

At the end of the war, Norway found itself in a situation where Soviet liberation troops were stationed in Finnmark and it was necessary to avoid new demands from the Soviet side. In this situation, the Norwegian government agreed to consider the joint defense of Svalbard, as well as to discuss the revision of the Svalbard Treaty. On January 29, Molotov announced that he was accepting the "proposal of the Norwegian government" to consider "the general military defense of the Svalbard archipelago and Bear Island."<sup>32</sup> On April 9, 1945, Andvord, the Norwegian ambassador to the USSR, handed Molotov a note with the Norwegian proposal of a joint statement, which, in particular, stated that the neutral status of Svalbard "is contrary to the interests of the two countries" and that the defense of the archipelago is "a common task of Norway and the Soviet Union".<sup>33</sup>

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30 Iz zapiski zamestitelja narodnogo komissara inostrannyh del SSSR V. G. Dekanozova narodnomu komissaru inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovu «Po voprosu o Shpicbergene i Medvezh'em ostrove» (From a note by the Deputy People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. G. Dekanozov to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. M. Molotov "On the Question of Svalbard and the Bear Island"), November 14, 1944. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.360-361

31 Zapis' besedy narodnogo komissara inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotova s ministrom inostrannyh del Norvegii T. Li o statuse Shpicbergena i o-va Medvezhij (Record of the conversation of the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway T. Lie on the status of Svalbard and Bear Island), November 12, 1944. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.364

32 Zapis' besedy narodnogo komissara inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotova s poslom Norvegii v SSSR R. O. Andvordom o sovместnoj oborone Shpicbergena i o-va Medvezhij (Record of the conversation of the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR V.M. Molotov with the Norwegian Ambassador to the USSR R.O. Andvord about the joint defense of Svalbard and Bear Island), January 29, 1945. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.373

33 Proekt sovместnoj deklaracii SSSR i Norvegii o Shpicbergene, peredanyj posol'stvom Norvegii v SSSR v Narodnyj komissariat inostrannyh del SSSR (Draft of the joint declaration of the USSR and Norway about Svalbard, delivered by the Norwegian Embassy to the USSR to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR), April 9, 1945. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.378-379

Although both sides generally favored such a proposal, the subsequent events in the first post-war year did not make it possible to implement it.

## **1.2 Negotiations on Svalbard at the end of World War II**

In the early post-war years, relations between the USSR and Norway and the international relations as a whole, developed under the influence of the formation of bloc confrontation and the Cold War in the late forties. The confrontation of the two blocs had gained direct influence on Soviet-Norwegian relations since 1949 after Norway joined NATO, as a result of which the countries ended up in opposing camps. Nevertheless, immediately after the end of World War II, the Soviet leadership had to build a special model of relations with Norway based on the initial duality: the development of cooperation and the establishment of friendly contacts, on the one hand, and an understanding of the fact that Norway was a potential participant of Western bloc and a theoretical adversary in the country's security system, on the other. In connection with the latter, the continuation of the discussion that began in 1944 on the statuses of Svalbard and Bear Island became particularly urgent. In fact, resolving the issue of the archipelago became a pivotal issue around which political relations unfolded between the two countries in 1945-1948.

As aforementioned, the USSR attempted to revise the Paris Treaty at the end of World War II. On November 12, 1944, People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov, said about Svalbard in negotiations with Norwegian Foreign Minister T. Lie, "In reality, there are only two countries - Norway and the Soviet Union that are interested in the waters of this region, and they should agree on this issue, and throw the Convention (Svalbard Treaty, 1920) itself in a basket ... The Soviet government proposes that the Svalbard islands, which until 1920 were no man's land, after the cancellation of the Convention belonged to both states in a condominium order."<sup>34</sup>

In May 1945, the Soviet leadership sent a number of congratulations and protocol declarations to the Norwegian king and government on the liberation of the country. The People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR returned to the most urgent, from its point of view, questions when a number of documents appeared in the department: July 3 — a certificate from the staff of the Fifth European Department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign

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34 Zapis' besedy narodnogo komissara inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotova s ministrom inostrannyh del Norvegii T. Lie o statuse Shpicbergena i o-va Medvezhij (Record of the conversation of the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway T. Lie on the status of Svalbard and Bear Island), November 12, 1944. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnosheniya 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.361-365

Affairs of the USSR M.S. Vetrova and T.L. Zhdanova, prepared for A.Ya. Vyshinsky and S.A. Lozovsky<sup>35</sup>, July 14 - secret note by the assistant to the chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Lieutenant General N.V. Slavin for the Deputy People's Commissar V.G. Dekanozov<sup>36</sup>, July 22 - secret note S.A. Lozovsky for People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov.<sup>37</sup> All three documents aimed at substantiating, from the political, military-strategic and economic points of view, the desirability and necessity of changing the status of Svalbard towards the Soviet-Norwegian condominium in the archipelago. They demonstrated changes in the understanding by the Soviet foreign policy leadership of the geopolitical significance of Norway after the war and show the generally changing role of this country as an object of Soviet policy.

In the first document, workers of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs M.S. Vetrov and T.L. Zhdanova proved the interest of the USSR in Northern Norway, and especially in Svalbard, based on the history of Russia and the experience of the recent war. They pointed out that "... it is quite natural that ... now, by agreement with the Norwegians ..., we would have the right to establish military naval and air bases ... on Svalbard and on Bear Island."<sup>38</sup>

The second document made by N.V. Slavin raised the question of the need to discuss with the Norwegian government the problem of improving the USSR's strategic position through the

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35 Spravka ispolnjajushhego objazannosti zavedujushhego Pjatym evropejskim otdelom NKID SSSR M. S.Vetrova i referenta otdeloa T. L.Zhdanovoj o neobhodimosti sozdaniya sovetskih voenny" baz v Severnoj Norvegii (Information from the Acting Head of the Fifth European Division of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR M.S. Vetrov and the assistant to the department T. L. Zhdanova about the need to create Soviet military bases in Northern Norway), July 3, 1945. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.383-384

36 Zapiska pomoshhnika nachal'nika General'nogo shtaba Krasnoj Armii general-lejtenanta N.V. Slavina o voenno-strategicheskom znachenii Varanger-fjorda (Note by the Assistant Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Lieutenant General N.V. Slavin on the military-strategic importance of the Varangerfjord), July 14, 1945. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.385-386

37 Zapiska zamestitelja narodnogo komissara inostrannyh del SSSR S. A. Lozovskogo narodnomu komissaru inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovu ob otpravke voenno-morskoj jekspedicii na Shpicbergen i o-v Medvezhij (Note by the Deputy People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR S. A. Lozovsky to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. M. Molotov on sending a naval expedition to Svalbard and Bear Island), July 22, 1945. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.387-388

38 Spravka ispolnjajushhego objazannosti zavedujushhego Pjatym evropejskim otdelom NKID SSSR M. S.Vetrova i referenta otdeloa T. L.Zhdanovoj o neobhodimosti sozdaniya sovetskih voenny" baz v Severnoj Norvegii (Information from the Acting Head of the Fifth European Division of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR M.S. Vetrov and the assistant to the department T. L. Zhdanova about the need to create Soviet military bases in Northern Norway), July 3, 1945. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.384

rental of Norwegian territory or receiving part of it for permanent use as compensation for the liberation of Norway by parts of the red army.<sup>39</sup>

Based on the presented materials and analysis of the international situation Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR S.A. Lozovsky reported the increased interest of the British and Americans in the archipelago and signs of their activity in the third document. In connection with it was proposed to send a naval compound, specialists for the restoration of mines, escort expedition by air and notify the Norwegian embassy in the USSR of these events only on their day beginning.<sup>40</sup>

The Svalbard issue began to be discussed in detail during the Soviet-Norwegian negotiations in late 1946. Negotiations were held between the foreign ministers of the countries concerned, namely V. M. Molotov and H. Lange, in Paris and New York respectively in August and on November 16-18, 1946.<sup>41</sup> All the proposals of V. M. Molotov regarding the drafting of the new agreement were met by H. Lange with the words that "any amendment of the contract must occur in accordance with the provisions of international law". This meant that this issue should be discussed by all countries that signed the Svalbard Treaty in 1920. In turn, V.M. Molotov noted that Italy and Japan which were signatories of the treaty, had no right to participate in the negotiations, because "they fought during the war against the allied powers." The negotiations resulted in the exclusion of Italy and Japan from among the countries that could discuss the question of amending the Svalbard treaty and the agreement on the need for formal negotiations on the whole range of problems.

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39 Zapiska pomoshhnika nachal'nika General'nogo shtaba Krasnoj Armii general-lejtenanta N.V. Slavina o voenno-strategicheskome znachenii Varanger-fjorda (Note by the Assistant Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Lieutenant General N.V. Slavin on the military-strategic importance of the Varangerfjord), July 14, 1945. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.385-386

40 Zapiska zamestitelja narodnogo komissara inostrannyh del SSSR S. A. Lozovskogo narodnomu komissaru inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovu ob otpravke voenno-morskoj jekspedicii na Shpicbergen i o-v Medvezhij (Note by the Deputy People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR S. A. Lozovsky to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. M. Molotov on sending a naval expedition to Svalbard and Bear Island), July 22, 1945. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.387

41 Zapis' besedy ministra inostrannyh del Norvegii H. M. Lange i predsedatelja komiteta stortinga po inostrannym delam T. Vol'da s ministrom inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovym i chlenom kollegii MID SSSR K. V. Novikovym o Shpicbergene (Record of the conversation between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, H. M. Lange and the Chairman of the Storting Committee on Foreign Affairs, T. Wold, with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V.M. Molotov and member of the Collegium of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR K.V. Novikov about Spitsbergen), November 16, 1946. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.413-420

It is also noteworthy that in the informal atmosphere of the negotiations in New York on November 16, 1946, Molotov outlined why Svalbard was important for the Soviet Union not only in military terms but also in economic opportunities. So, Molotov emphasized that "Svalbard coal is of vital importance for the entire northern part of the Soviet Union, and especially as the only source of coal for Soviet ships in this region<sup>42</sup>". Molotov asked for consideration the question of "economic rights identical with the Norwegians ... for laying test pits and using possible new deposits, as well as for hunting and fishing rights<sup>43</sup>". This issue was noted by Lange and was promised to be considered by the Norwegian government.

On January 14, 1947, H. Lange's report to the government was held, which decided to resume negotiations on the Svalbard issue with its simultaneous posing at the UN. The issue of the archipelago was also the subject of discussion in the Storting, which led to a leak of information - information about the negotiations got to "The Times" on January 17, 1947, and then to all the world newspapers.

On January 17, 1947, the Norwegian press published a communiqué from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which expressed regret over the public disclosure of the fact of the negotiations. In this way, the government gave the problem an international character and Western partners were involved in influencing the outcome of the discussion. This gives reason to believe that the Norwegian minister tried in advance to predetermine the outcome of the case in a direction unfavorable to the USSR. To some extent, T. Lie confirmed this during a meeting with the USSR Ambassador to Norway S. A. Afanasyev. According to him during a trip to Oslo, he told the king, E. Gerhardsen, Prime Minister of Norway, and H. Lange that the government made a serious mistake.<sup>44</sup> He mentioned that under the same conditions that the United States was asking for itself about Greenland, the Soviet Union could make claim to Spitsbergen and

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42 Zapis' besedy ministra inostrannyh del Norvegii H. M. Lange i predsedatelja komiteta stortinga po inostrannyh delam T. Vol'da s ministrom inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovym i chlenom kollegii MID SSSR K. V. Novikovym o Shpicbergene (Record of the conversation between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, H. M. Lange and the Chairman of the Storting Committee on Foreign Affairs, T. Wold, with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V.M. Molotov and member of the Collegium of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR K.V. Novikov about Spitsbergen), November 16, 1946. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.414

43 Ibid.

44 Iz zapisi besedy posla SSSR v Norvegii S. A. Afanas'eva s general'nym sekretarem OON T. Lie o sovetsko-norvezhskih peregovorah ob oborone Shpicbergena 9 ijulja 1947 (From the recording of the conversation between the USSR Ambassador to Norway S. A. Afanasyev and the UN Secretary-General T. Lie about the Soviet-Norwegian negotiations on the defense of Spitsbergen on July 9, 1947), July 17, 1947. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p.436

this would not contradict the UN charter.<sup>45</sup> It is also important to note that in the same conversation, T. Lie told the USSR ambassador that he had a conversation personally with U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall, who indicated that there was no US pressure on Norway in the issue of Svalbard.<sup>46</sup>

On February 15, 1947, the Storting adopted a resolution on the issue of Spitsbergen, of which H. Lange handed over the details to V. Molotov in a letter. It stated, in particular, the following: “... the international situation has changed as a result of the end of the war ... as a result of the fact that the United Nations was created and began its work aimed at ensuring peace and security ... those circumstances stipulated the text of the Norwegian draft joint declaration, but they no longer exist, and the opening of negotiations of a military nature with any foreign power regarding the defense of the area under the sovereignty of Norway would be contrary to that external the policy that the Government has been pursuing along with the Storting since the liberation.<sup>47</sup>”

A 1946 report from the USSR Embassy in Norway on the development of events around Spitsbergen stated that the point of view of the Norwegians in 1946 changed under pressure from the United Kingdom and the United States, which would never have supported the idea of joint defense of Svalbard. From the report, it now becomes clear that the only thing that can be discussed with the Norwegian government is “the revision of the Spitsbergen treatise of 1920 and the settlement of the mutual economic interests of the USSR and Norway on Svalbard.<sup>48</sup>”

In a secret memorandum on March 10, 1947, the ambassador of the USSR in Norway, N.D. Kuznetsov, wrote to V.M. Molotov, that “...Lange after each conversation with comrade Molotov both in Paris and New York...consistently informed the British and Americans about the course of negotiations between Norway and the USSR on the Svalbard issue”, and “the Anglo-American negative response to the Norwegian draft general declaration played a decisive

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45 Ibid., p. 437

46 Ibid.

47 Pis'mo ministra inostrannyh del Norvegii H. M. Lange ministru inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovu o rezoljucii norvezhskogo stortinga otnositel'no peregovorov po Shpicbergenu (Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, H. M. Lange, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V.M. Molotov on the resolution of the Norwegian Storting regarding negotiations on Spitsbergen), Oslo, February 15, 1947. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 426

48 Iz otcheta posol'stva SSSR v Norvegii za 1946 g. (From the 1946 report of the USSR Embassy in Norway), March 8, 1947. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 428

role in Norway's refusal to continue negotiations in this way...<sup>49</sup>” This fact was openly admitted in a personal conversation with T. Wold, the chairman of the Storting’s foreign policy committee, on February 25, 1947. According to him, “Norway is influenced by other great powers in this matter.<sup>50</sup>”

The USSR was trying to return to negotiations with Norway, looking for other pretexts, such as the possibility of concluding a Soviet-Norwegian defense pact against an attack by Germany.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the Soviet government tried to get ahead of the British or US representatives by signing a military agreement.

Thus, in 1947, the issue of Svalbard by the Norwegian side was removed from the agenda of relations between the USSR and Norway. The phasing out of negotiations on this issue was one of the results of Norway’s pulling into the orbit of military-political cooperation of Western countries in 1947-1949. It also testified to the increasing rejection of each other’s foreign policy both in the USSR and in Norway.

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49 Dokladnaja zapiska posla SSSR v Norvegii N. D. Kuznecova ministru inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovu o peregovorah otnositel'no peresmotra Parizhskogo dogovora 1920 goda o Shpicbergene (Memorandum of the USSR Ambassador to Norway, N. D. Kuznetsov, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. M. Molotov on negotiations regarding the revision of the Paris Treaty of 1920 on Spitsbergen), March 10, 1947. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 429

50 Ibid.

51 Iz zapiski posla SSSR v Norvegii N. D. Kuznecova ministru inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovu o meroprijatijah po ukrepleniju pozicij SSSR v Norvegii (From a note by the USSR Ambassador to Norway, N. D. Kuznetsov, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. M. Molotov on measures to strengthen the USSR’s position in Norway), May 5, 1947. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 431

### 1.3 Bridge-building policy as a reason for changing relations between countries

It is important to understand that such discussions were held only by Norway because at that time there was a transformation of the Norwegian model of behavior in international relations. At the end of World War II, the Norwegian foreign policy changed and thus led to changes in relations between the USSR and Norway. The changes occurred because the Norwegians suffered very heavy losses in World War II. One third of the country was ruined including the economy being seriously undermined and weakened partly with respect to the failed economic policies under the occupying authorities. In the first months after the country's liberation, the government was almost completely engaged in the development and implementation of a reconstruction and stabilization program. Philip M. Burgess emphasized that most of the political and history analysts who were studying Norwegian post-war foreign policy pointed at the Norwegian foreign policy return to neutrality (or "quasi-neutrality"). He pointed out that such a characteristic of Norwegian foreign policy will border on gross distortions, possibly confusing inaction with calculated non-involvement.<sup>52</sup>

Norway's new policy was called the policy of "bridgebuilding". Based on the country's position and the role of the Euro-Arctic North Atlantic and communications in the war, the ideologists of "bridge-building" policy suggested that Norway could serve as a natural geographical bridge in political and economic relations between the West and the East. Thus, the Norwegian government believed that social democracy, which was the ideology of the ruling party, could become the third force in the antagonism between the radical capitalism of the West and communism of the East. Thus, it contributed to the development of cooperation between the USSR and Western allies. The policy of "bridge-building" was therefore largely due to the continuation of allied relations between Western European countries and the Soviet Union.

According to Sven G. Holtsmark, a professor at the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies, Norway began the process of building this policy during World War II, though its practical implementation came after the war. The author indicated this by the example of the fact that, for example, their policy towards Finland, which is part of Scandinavia and shares common values with Norway, underwent changes in autumn 1941 in order to express solidarity with the Soviet Union. In spring 1942, there was even a proposal to declare war to Finland, although later this idea was rejected by T. Lie.<sup>53</sup>

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52 Philip M. Burgess, *Elite Images and Foreign Policy Outcomes: A Study of Norway*, Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1967, p. 79

53 Holtsmark, Sven Gabriel. 1988. *Between "russophobia and bridge-building": The Norwegian government and the Soviet Union*. Report, Institutt for forsvarsstudier, p. 38



Trygve Lie talked about “bridge-building” policy that way, “The smaller nations have a great part to play in cementing the peace. They are disinterested in many political disputes; their ambitions are cultural and economic aspects. And so, in the opinion of the Norwegian delegation, their foreign policy should aim at making a sincere contribution to the mutual understanding and confidence of the great powers.<sup>54</sup>” According to Norwegian historian Helge Pharo, Norway’s first post-war Labor government launched a policy of bridgebuilding to ensure that Norway was not involved in any conflicts either from the United States and Great Britain or from the Soviet Union.<sup>55</sup> Such a foreign policy was designed to satisfy the foreign policy preferences of various social groups - supporters of pro-Western orientation, adherents of cooperation with the USSR, adherents of Scandinavian integration and neutralists.

Despite the presence of positive principles in the foundations of the “bridge-building” policy, it nevertheless proved to be more passive. The passive nature of the course was expressed in several aspects. For example, when participating in the UN, Norway constantly sought to avoid involvements in the discussion issues that affected the interests of great powers. Norway, however, continued to make every effort to create political unity between the great powers. According to Norway, the UN could not function as an effective instrument of political security without the unity of its member countries. Consequently, the cooperation of the great powers was the highest priority of Norwegian foreign policy.<sup>56</sup>

However, with the growing disagreements between the USSR and the USA with Great Britain during 1946-1947, it became increasingly difficult for the Norwegian government to balance between the West and the East. The bridge-building policy could occur only when there were no opposing political and military blocs, and when international processes did not put the country in front of the choice of one of the sides. However, a series of post-war events forced Norway to determine its position already during 1946-1947. One of these challenges was the decisive movement of the North Atlantic states towards confrontation with the USSR. It was proclaimed in a famous speech on March 5, 1946, in Fulton (USA), by the leader of the British conservative opposition, W. L. S. Churchill. Another challenge to Norwegian bridge-building policy was the initiative of US Secretary of State J.K. Marshall on June 5, 1947, as well as the Truman Doctrine on March 12, 1947.

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54 Philip M. Burgess, *Elite Images and Foreign Policy Outcomes: A Study of Norway*, Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1967, p. 82

55 Kiel, Anne Cohen. *Continuity and Change: Aspects of Contemporary Norway*. Oslo: Scandinavian UP, 1993, p. 235

56 Philip M. Burgess, *Elite Images and Foreign Policy Outcomes: A Study of Norway*, Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1967, p. 82

The USSR refused American aid under the Marshall Plan and forced the Eastern European states and Finland to follow suit. In April 1948, Norway and other Scandinavian countries officially joined the Marshall Plan. They accepted economic assistance on American terms, as reflected in bilateral agreements with the United States. Meanwhile, they all became members of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) which implemented the "Marshall Plan". Such a turn in politics considerably demonstrated that the bridge-building policy began to collapse, and the orientation of Norway's foreign policy have shifted towards the West. The collapse of the bridge-building policy was accelerated by a speech on January 22, 1948 by E. Bevin, UK's Foreign Minister at the time, who proposed the creation of the Western Union.<sup>57</sup> Halvard Lange, by the time he turned back on the "bridge-building" policy, was still concerned about the country's security. By that time, it was no longer possible to rely on the UN, so Bevin's idea rose just in time.<sup>58</sup> During a conversation between the First Secretary of the USSR Embassy in Norway M.F. Cherkasov and the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Norwegian Labour Party, H. Lie, has confirmed changes in Norwegian policy. H. S. Lie said that "...hopes that it was possible to create some kind of "bridge" between the West and the East were not justified. Disagreements between the Soviet Union and Western countries are growing...it is time to take some effective measures to prevent a new war in Europe... a union of Western European countries, which would be an opposing force with equal strength against the USA and the USSR, would be the best way."<sup>59</sup>

Despite the analysis of the sources, it is not entirely clear why there was no adequate reaction of the Soviet senior political leadership to the radical transformation of Norwegian foreign policy in 1947-1948, though its character was obviously unfavorable for the USSR. In addition, the USSR Embassy in Norway transmitted accurate information about what was happening in Norway and offered concrete proposals and possible solutions.<sup>60</sup> In February 1948, S.A.

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57 Mr Ernest Bevin speech—HC Deb 22 January 1948 vol 446 cc383-517 URL: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1948/jan/22/foreign-affairs>

58 Skodvin, Magne. *Nordic or North Atlantic Alliance? The Postwar Scandinavian Security Debate*. Vol. 3/1990. *Forsvarsstudier*, p. 22

59 Iz zapisi besedy mezhdu pervym sekretarem posol'stva SSSR v Norvegii M. F. Cherkasovym i sekretarem Central'nogo komiteta norvezhskoj rabochej partii H. S. Lie o "plane Bevina" i voenno-politicheskom sotrudnichestve Skandinavskih stran 3 fevralja 1948 goda (From the recording of the conversation between the First Secretary of the USSR Embassy in Norway M.F. Cherkasov and the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Norwegian Workers Party H. S. Lie about the "Bevin Plan" and the military-political cooperation of the Scandinavian countries on February 3, 1948), February 22, 1948. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 445

60 Iz otcheta posol'stva SSSR v Norvegii za 1947 god: razdel "Vyvody i predlozhenija" (From the report of the USSR Embassy in Norway for 1947: section "Conclusions and proposals"), March 16, 1948. In

Afanasyev, the Soviet ambassador in Norway, wrote to V.M. Molotov that "... it cannot be said that Norway has fully joined the Western bloc hostile to the Soviet Union. ...". However, "... the Norwegian government should have been warned about the consequences that Norway's accession to the Western bloc...would have for Soviet-Norwegian relations," that is, "... would be understood by the public opinion of the Soviet Union as an unfriendly act."<sup>61</sup>

On the same note, the ambassador recalled that it was necessary to return to the question of Svalbard. He emphasized that an answer was needed to the letter from H. Lange, of which it referred to the decision of the Storting on the Svalbard issue of February 15, 1947, and the proposal to revise the 1920 Treaty.<sup>62</sup> This again indicated the inaction of the USSR on the Svalbard issue while Norway, on the contrary, was more active at that time. For example, they disrupted the purchase of a land plot in the archipelago by the Soviet Union in 1947.<sup>63</sup>

It can be concluded that by spring 1948 the cycle of evolution concerning the principles of the Norwegian foreign policy was completed. The bridge-building policy did not lead to the expected results, and Norway returned to conduct international activities based on guarantees from Western partners. According to Sven G. Holtmark, contacts between Norway and the Soviet Union were inactive during the second World War and in the post-war years when the bridge-building policy were in effect. He pointed out that the relations between Norway and the Soviet Union were assigned a secondary place in the Norwegian foreign policy and such bilateral relations were more likely to be "non-policy" in relation to the Soviet Union.<sup>64</sup>

It seems possible to argue that the USSR did not have a clearly developed political line regarding Norway. However, it is obvious that the top leadership of the Soviet Union understood the significance of Svalbard from the experience of World War II. Negotiations on Spitsbergen which commenced in 1944 were part of the Soviet Union's policy to keep Norway from drawing Western powers into military-political cooperation. It is important, however, to indicate that the phasing out of negotiations on Svalbard in 1947 was initiated by Norway, while the Soviet

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*Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 453

61 Zapiska posla SSSR v Norvegii S. A. Afanas'eva ministru inostrannyh del SSSR V. M. Molotovu po voprosam o Shpicbergene, o vozobnovlenii Olesundskoj koncessii i ob otnoshenii Norvegii k "planu Bevina" (Note by the USSR Ambassador to Norway S. A. Afanasyev to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. M. Molotov on questions about Spitsbergen, on the renewal of the Aalesund concession and on Norway's attitude to the "Bevin plan"), Februar 23, 1948. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 447

62 Ibid., p. 448

63 Ibid.

64 Holtmark, Sven Gabriel. 1988. Between "russophobia and bridge-building": The Norwegian government and the Soviet Union. Report, Institutt for forsvarsstudier, p. 63

Union did not have any arguments to continue the discussion. The USSR, among other things, lost one of its levers of influence - economic ties, while the United States, on the contrary, acquired one after Norway joined the Marshall Plan.

Thus, the leadership of the USSR clearly recognized their own interests and political goals in Svalbard, as well as in Norway as a whole, but the superpower did not take significant measures to achieve them.

## **2. The first years of Norway's membership in NATO and the impact of this factor on relations with the Soviet Union**

The division of the world into two confrontational camps was already clearly visible by mid-1947. The prior direction in the foreign policy of the USSR was the formation of a kind of "security belt" on its western borders through its reinforcement of control over the countries of Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. The main motive of the American strategy, in response, was the creation of the "Allied Ring" around the Soviet sphere of influence. Soviet leaders continued to pursue a rather restrained policy towards the United States, declaring the need for further cooperation, but this was becoming increasingly difficult since serious problems were accumulating in relations between partners in the anti-Hitler coalition.

On April 4, 1949, the Washington Treaty was officially signed on the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Denmark, Norway, and Iceland signed the North Atlantic Treaty despite the warnings of the Soviet Union.<sup>65</sup>

Norway's signatory on the North Atlantic Treaty alarmed the USSR. On May 14, 1949, A.S. Afanasyev, the Soviet ambassador in Norway, identified the problem of the conflict between the two treaties - the Paris Treaty of 1920 and the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949.<sup>66</sup> The first of them obliged Norway, among other things, to never allow the creation of military or naval bases on the archipelago, and not to use it at all military purposes. All signatory countries of the Washington Treaty of 1949 are obliged to increase their ability to repel aggression in not only their continental but also island territories, in accordance with the measures established in the agreement.

The outbreak of the Korean War led to a significant priority revision on the security policy in Western Europe including Norway. As a result, information and assumptions about the possibility of the use of military force against it by the Soviet Union began to circulate in the foreign policy and military circles of Norway. On January 19, 1951, the Norwegian government proposed to the Storting a decree "On the participation of Norway in the creation of a common

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65 North Atlantic Treaty, April 4, 1949.

URL: <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust000004-0828.pdf>

66 Zapiska posla SSSR v Norvegii S. A. Afanas'eva ministru inostrannyh del SSSR A. Ja. Vyshinskomu o vozmozhnom ispol'zovanii Shpicbergena v voennyh celjah v svjazi s vstupleniem Norvegii v NATO (Note by the USSR Ambassador to Norway S. A. Afanasyev to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR A. Ya. Vyshinsky on the possible use of Spitsbergen for military purposes in connection with Norway's accession to NATO), May 14, 1949. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 476

command system and common armed forces of the Atlantic Pact countries,” which, on March 14, 1951, was approved.<sup>67</sup>

The fact that Norway included the territory of the Svalbard archipelago at the stake of the SACLANT command had quickly become known to the Soviet Union. However, an instant reaction did not occur. It was until October 15, 1951, when a note of protest was sent to Norway by the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The nature of the Norwegian military events held after signing the North Atlantic Pact was hostile to the USSR, according to the statement.<sup>68</sup> The Soviet note provoked a fairly high and fast activity from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On October 15, 1951, the Ministry formulated a common position for representative offices and embassies overseas. The preliminary position of the government regarding the Soviet statement was reported: “... the main intention [of the USSR] is to continue the war of nerves in order to undermine the unity of the countries of the Atlantic Pact by organizing separate demarches.<sup>69</sup>” In addition, The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested that such a note was “... a preparatory measure for further pressure on the issue of Svalbard.<sup>70</sup>” In this regard, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry sent a separate telegram to the Governor of Svalbard on this occasion on October 18. The telegram stated that “... the allegation of a violation of the Treaty of Svalbard will be categorically rejected.”<sup>71</sup> The process of developing a Norwegian response to the Soviet note was accompanied by a multidimensional analysis of the situation in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. Therefore, J. Boyesen, the Secretary of State at the time on compiled a memo on October 22, 1951 concerning the Soviet note dated October 15, at which he proposed to understand the main content of the Soviet statement as reserving the right to the freedom of action on the Svalbard issue. He also suggested that the possibility of an undeclared strike from the USSR could not be ruled out. In this case, the Secretary of State considered that there was not only a guarantee from NATO, but also no certainty about what

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67 Stortings preposisjoner № 20 – Stortingsforhandling 1951, bind 2a

68 Nota MID SSSR posol'stvu Norvegii v SSSR o voennyh meroprijatijah Norvegii v svjazi s ee uchastiem v NATO (Note by the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Norwegian Embassy in the USSR about Norway's military activities in connection with its participation in NATO), October 15, 1951. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 502

69 Informacija MID Norvegii dlja norvezhskih predstavitel'stv za rubezhom o note MID SSSR ot 15 oktjabrja 1951 goda (Information from the Norwegian Foreign Ministry for Norwegian missions abroad on a note from the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated October 15, 1951), October 17, 1951. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 505

70 Ibid.

71 Telegramma MID Norvegii gubernatoru Shpicbergena o sovetskoj note ot 15 oktjabrja 1951 goda (Telegram from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Governor of Spitsbergen on the Soviet note dated October 15, 1951), October 18, 1951. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 506

actions the Allies could take.<sup>72</sup> Responding to a note from the USSR, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 30, 1951, assured that “the Norwegian government...will not create any military fortifications or bases on the Spitsbergen archipelago or Bear Island...also will not allow any other state to do so.”<sup>73</sup>

In the new international situation, Norway has adopted a strategy of containment and reassurance in relation to the Soviet Union. Membership in NATO was a major deterrent. To avoid the Kremlin misinterpreting Norway’s actions as aggressive, Oslo introduced a number of restrictions. NATO allies will be prohibited from participating in military exercises east of the 24th meridian.<sup>74</sup>

In June 1953, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, G.M. Pushkin, sent a note to V.M. Molotov, in which he analyzed the situation around Svalbard in connection with Norway’s NATO membership. Despite the absence of appropriate actions on the role of the USSR, the Norwegian press and certain political circles continued to take the problem and the content of the notes by the Soviet government to accuse the USSR of aggressive intentions and suspicions of Soviet goals on Spitsbergen. In this regard, it was proposed to put an end to the suspicions of the Norwegians by making a statement about the USSR’s lack of intention to challenge the sovereignty of Norway over the archipelago.<sup>75</sup> Although the government of the Soviet Union did not make such a statement, it nevertheless gives the opportunity to see a change in the attitude of the Soviet leadership to the issue of Spitsbergen.

The most important event that completed the first stage of relations between the USSR and Norway during the Cold War and led to their relative normalization was the visit of the Norwegian Prime Minister, E. Gerhardsen, in 1955. On June 28, 1955, the Chairman of the Norwegian cabinet, in a conversation with the USSR Ambassador in Norway, G.P. Arkadyev,

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72 Pamjatnaja zapiska stats-sekretarja ministerstva inostrannyh del Norvegii J. Boyesen o sovetskoj note ot 15 oktjabrja 1951 (Memorial note by State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway J.

Boyesen on the Soviet note dated October 15, 1951), October 22, 1951. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 506-507

73 Nota MID Norvegii posol'stvu SSSR v Norvegii v otvet na sovetskiju notu ot 15 oktjabrja 1951 goda (Note by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry to the USSR Embassy in Norway in response to the Soviet Note dated October 15, 1951), October 30, 1951. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 508

74 Jensen, Leif Christian. *International Relations in the Arctic: Norway and the Struggle for Power in the New North*, p. 37

75 Iz zapiski zamestitelja ministra inostrannyh del SSSR G.M. Pushkina ministru inostrannyh del V.M. Molotovu o pozicii SSSR v otnoshenii Shpicbergena i ostrova Medvezhij (From a note by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR G.M. Pushkin to the Minister of Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov on the position of the USSR in relation to Svalbard and Bear Island), June 1953. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 518

made it clear that he had a desire to visit the Soviet Union in order to discuss issues such as a declaration of cooperation in peace-keeping, inter-parliamentary exchange, trade cooperation, and cultural relations, as well as the river Paatsjoki.<sup>76</sup> An official invitation was sent to the Norwegian Prime Minister on August 20, and on August 28 he agreed with the visit.

In between November 10-16, 1955, E. Gerhardsen, the Prime Minister of Norway, was on visit in the USSR. Following the visit, the Norwegian Prime Minister issued a joint Soviet-Norwegian communiqué. An article related to military bases in Norway was introduced into the draft document. Regarding this issue, the Norwegian side proposed the statement “...the Norwegian Government will not promote aggressive policies and will not provide bases on Norwegian territory to foreign armed forces until Norway is attacked or threatened with attack.<sup>77</sup>” Thus, the beginning of the practical implementation of the new international course of Norway chronologically coincided with the deployment of the first stage of the Cold War, which ended up with the war in Korea. The period between the second half of 1945 and 1955 included three main stages: 1) unsuccessful bridge-building policy and participation in the “Marshall Plan” until the second third of 1948; 2) curtailing the post-war course, abandoning the “Scandinavian bloc” to security policy and joining NATO in 1949; 3) military-political integration in the structure of the alliance.

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<sup>76</sup> Zapis' besedy posla SSSR v Norvegii G. P. Arkad'eva s prem'er-ministrom Norvegii E. Gerhadsenom 28 ijunja 1955 goda otnositel'no vizita Gerhadsena v SSSR (Record of the conversation between the Ambassador of the USSR in Norway G.P. Arkadiev and the Prime Minister of Norway E. Gerhardsen on June 28, 1955, regarding Gerhardsen's visit to the USSR), June 29, 1955. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 533-535

<sup>77</sup> Sovetsko-norvezhskoe kommjunike po itogam vizita prem'er-ministra Norvegii Je. Gerhadsena v SSSR (Soviet-Norwegian communiqué following the visit of the Prime Minister of Norway E. Gerhardsen to the USSR), November 16, 1955. In *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnoshenija 1917-1955*. Ed. by Ulav Riste, A.O. Chubar'jan and others. Moscow, 1997. p. 584



### **3. Conflicting situations around Svalbard during the Cold War**

This chapter describes some of the main crisis situations that have arisen between Norway and the Soviet Union around the problem of the Svalbard archipelago.

Between the 1950s and 1960s, Russian-Norwegian relations on Svalbard did not experience significant shocks until the late 1970s, when they again entered a turbulent zone. A number of negative events occurred concerning Svalbard. Yet in general, relations between Norway and the Soviet Union remained constructive and even positive.

One of the stumbling blocks in relations between Norway and the Soviet Union was the issue of security on the archipelago during the construction of ESRO radars in the 60s. This critical situation will be investigated and will reveal how Norway behaved during similar crisis situations during the Cold War.

Another challenge in international relations that will be described in this chapter is the crisis situation with the crash of the Soviet Tu-16 reconnaissance aircraft on the island of Hopen, which is part of the Svalbard archipelago.

In addition, the chapter deals with the establishment in 1977 of a 200-mile exclusive economic zone around Svalbard.

### 3.1 The ESRO radars

During and after World War II, there had been tremendous progress in communications and radar technologies. However, such technologies were not yet perfect, and the researchers drew attention to the problems caused by the complex atmospheric conditions in the polar regions. Geophysical exploration became a link in the competition between East and West, especially when space exploration using rockets and satellites began.

Based on the initiatives of 1959-60, many European countries established the European Space Research Organization (ESRO) in 1964.<sup>78</sup>

Extensive atmospheric research on Svalbard has already been conducted with the participation of several Norwegian research institutes in these years. The Northern Lights Observatory and the Armed Forces Research Institute conducted joint research at the ionospheric station in Ny-Ålesund, which was founded immediately after the cessation of coal mining in 1963.<sup>79</sup>

At this early stage, Norway decided not to become a full member of ESRO, but to monitor the process as an observer. One reason for this was that participation would require too many resources. However, Norway has participated in various ESRO research projects in varying degrees.<sup>80</sup>

ESRO planned to create a whole network of satellite information receiving stations, and Svalbard was the most suitable place for this. At that time, ESRO planned to establish four stations for receiving telemetric signals from the organization's satellites in Svalbard.<sup>81</sup>

In early 1964, the organization turned to the Norwegian authorities to inquire about the possibilities of building such a telemetry station on the archipelago. In September 1964, the government gave permission, but there were still details that were required to be resolved. The location of the station was still being discussed. ESRO chose Longyearbyen because of the already well-developed infrastructure, and the Norwegian authorities insisted on Ny-Ålesund because it was necessary to develop this region, especially when coal mining in the village

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78 Tamnes, Rolf. *Svalbard Og Den Politiske Avmakt: Striden Om Flyplass, Olje, Og Telemetri-stasjon, 1955-1970*. Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 1992, p. 58

79 Arlov, Thor B., E. Dieva, and Anastasija Komkova. *Istorija Archipelaga Špicbergen*. Moskva: Paulsen, 2016, p. 477

80 Tamnes, Rolf. *Svalbard Og Den Politiske Avmakt: Striden Om Flyplass, Olje, Og Telemetri-stasjon, 1955-1970*. Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 1992, p. 58

81 Tamnes, Rolf. *Svalbard Og Den Politiske Avmakt: Striden Om Flyplass, Olje, Og Telemetri-stasjon, 1955-1970*. Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 1992, p. 59

ceased<sup>82</sup>. In December 1964, an agreement was reached on the location of the station in Ny-Ålesund.<sup>83</sup>

However, there remained a problem with the Soviet Union on this issue. There were great fears that Moscow would veto such a project and would use this pretext to build its own similar station on Spitsbergen. It was important to behave cautiously and to shift maximally the focus of attention towards scientific research. The Norwegian Research Council has been appointed as the ESRO partner with the condition that the staff and managers of the new telemetry station be council members. In practice, the Armed Forces Research Institute took an active part in the activities of the station.

The reaction from the Soviet Union to the appearance of the station was, of course, negative. On February 17, 1965, Norway received an official note of protest, with reference to article 9 of the Svalbard Treaty of 1920.<sup>84</sup> However, the Norwegians stood their ground and firmly decided not to accept objections from the Soviet Union, which, in particular, was reflected in the reply note to the Soviet government of March 23. In subsequent years, the Russians continued to exert direct and indirect political pressure on the Norwegian authorities. The wariness of the Soviet Union was quite expected. Norwegian authorities were not surprised that the Russians exerted pressure and threatened retaliation to them.

In spring 1974, the ESRO program was completed. Over almost eight years of operation of the telemetry station, it was possible to collect extensive data on radiation, particles, and other physical properties of space. Although the project was completed, the created infrastructure was useful for other projects. Norway is also a member of the European organization EISCAT (European Incoherent Scatter Scientific Association) which conducts research on the outer atmosphere using radar technology. One of these stations was built in Longyearbyen.<sup>85</sup> After almost a year of the test work the station was officially commissioned in August 1996. In 1999 a second antenna was installed, among which Japan took part in its financing. The main task of the station is to study the northern lights and the ozone layer.

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82 Tamnes, Rolf. *Svalbard Og Den Politiske Avmakt: Striden Om Flyplass, Olje, Og Telemetri-stasjon, 1955-1970*. Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 1992, p. 60

83 Arlov, Thor B., E. Dieva, and Anastasija Komkova. *Istorija Archipelaga Špicbergen*. Moskva: Paulsen, 2016, p. 478

84 *Ibid.*, p.480

85 Åtland, Kristian, and Torbjørn Pedersen. *Cold War Legacies in Russia's Svalbard Policy*. London: Routledge, 2014, p. 22

It is important to emphasize that although the leadership of the Soviet Union was suspicious of the radar project on Svalbard, Norway managed to pursue an openness policy, through insisting on and creating such a scientific base in the North.

### **3.2 Establishing a 200-mile fisheries economic zone around Svalbard**

Svalbard is a geopolitically and economically complex and important area. Various states are interested in the territory and resources of the archipelago. There are ongoing legal disputes around the archipelago. The origins of these legal disputes have evoked various interpretations and lie in the outdated, and sometimes obscure, wording of Svalbard. Over the course of the twentieth century, enormous developments in the field of the law of the sea took place related to the creation of exclusive economic zones, which could not be envisaged by the negotiators of the treaty at the beginning of the 20th century.

Norway and Russia established their 200-nautical mile Exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in 1976 and 1977, respectively.<sup>86</sup> After establishing its EEZ in the Barents Sea, Norway decided to establish a fisheries protection zone (FPZ) around the Svalbard Archipelago. On June 3, 1977, Norway announced in a unilateral order the introduction of a 200-mile fish protection zone in the sea area of Svalbard. Norway argues that the 200-mile maritime zone around Svalbard is not covered by the Treaty, and thus a regular EEZ where Norway has sovereign rights. In response to the actions of Norway, a note of protest from the Government of the USSR on June 15, 1977, followed. It stated that Norway's decision to establish a 200-mile fish protection zone means "a clear discrepancy with the obligations assumed by Norway under the Svalbard Treaty of 1920. The decision was made unilaterally by the Norwegian government and is based on the internal legislation of Norway, although it concerns a special area that is subject to the said agreement."<sup>87</sup>

Norway then reaffirmed its sovereignty in the adjacent waters around Svalbard, saying that Svalbard does not have its own continental shelf, but instead lies on the continental shelf, which is a continuation of the Norwegian mainland.<sup>88</sup>

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86 Jensen, Øystein. *Noreg Og Havets Folkerett. (Norway and Law of the Sea). Vol. 5.* Nordområdebiblioteket. p.02

87 Åtland, Kristian, and Torbjørn Pedersen. *Cold War Legacies in Russia's Svalbard Policy.* London: Routledge, 2014. p. 29

88 Koivurova, Timo, and Filip Holiencin. "Demilitarisation and Neutralisation of Svalbard: How Has the Svalbard Regime Been Able to Meet the Changing Security Realities during Almost 100 Years of Existence?" *Polar Record* 53, no. 2 (2017). P.137

From the international law point of view, Norway cannot assign these sections of the high seas with its internal legislative acts, or Norway must subordinate the regime of these sections to the regime established for the archipelago by the Svalbard Treaty in 1920. Norway is, however, not very keen on a potential revision of the Svalbard Treaty.

The question of the legal regime of the sea spaces around Svalbard and its natural resources has not been resolved in subsequent years. In fact, the Norwegian decision created long-standing and heated debates that go around the question of Norway's unilateral actions to extend its influence to vast areas adjacent to the archipelago. Most countries of the world, except Canada and Finland, do not recognize the legality of Norway's actions.

To resolve the negative aspects in bilateral relations, on October 15, 1976, the governments of the USSR and Norway signed an agreement on mutual relations in the field of fisheries<sup>89</sup>, and on January 11, 1978, the Protocol on provisional rules for fishing in the adjacent section of the Barents Sea,<sup>90</sup> a disputed area where interests clashed two countries, as mentioned above.

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89 Agreement Between the Government of The Kingdom of Norway And the Government of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Concerning Mutual Relations in the Field of Fisheries. Moscow, October 15, 1976. Accessed September 17, 2019. <https://iea.uoregon.edu/treaty-text/1976-norway-ussr-fisheriesrelationsentxt>

90 Avtale mellom Norge og Sovjetunionen om en midlertidig praktisk ordning for fisket i et tilstøtende område i Barentshavet med tilhørende protokoll og erklæring (Agreement Between Norway and the Soviet Union on a Temporary and Practical Arrangement for the Fishery in an Adjacent Area of the Barents Sea), Oslo, January 11, 1978, in force 27 April 1978, *Overenskomster med fremmede stater* (1978), 436.

### 3.3 The Hopen airplane accident

The 1920 Svalbard Treaty prohibits the deployment of naval bases and fortifications and the use of the territory of the archipelago for military purposes. It is important to note that, throughout history, military activity on the archipelago has been very low or almost nonexistent. According to the Norwegian historian Thor B. Arlov, military intelligence in the Svalbard region is associated primarily with two factors. First, countries want to make sure that activities and facilities there are for civilian but not military purposes. Secondly, the geographical location of the archipelago is important for strategic planning.<sup>91</sup> Sea spaces to the south and west of Spitsbergen provide the Russian northern fleet, both surface and underwater, with access to the Atlantic Ocean. In this regard, NATO countries need to monitor the Russian fleet, and the Russians, for their part, need to understand the deployment of the NATO fleet.

Svalbard already became a field of activity for military intelligence of world powers in the late 1950s, although only a few were aware of what was actually happening. Americans during this period developed spy satellites. In the spring of 1959, a capsule with photographed material fell from such a satellite, Discoverer 2, into the Spitsbergen area. A search operation had begun under the guise of civilian research work. West-German and British aircraft took part in the operation, and the Norwegian Air Force placed helicopters at the disposal of the Americans. However, the capsule with the film could not be found.<sup>92</sup>

To study relations between Norway and the USSR, another case related to Soviet aviation is more interesting. On August 28, 1978, the Tu-16 Northern Fleet reconnaissance plane crashed on the island of Hopen, a part of the Svalbard archipelago. In the conditions of constantly deteriorating relations between the USSR and NATO, this incident immediately became a source of additional tension.

The first to arrive at the crash site were the Norwegians who hastened to the area, but nearby were the ships of the Northern Fleet. Moscow exerted maximum political pressure on Norway in order to force the nation to recognize the right of the Soviet side to study the scene of the accident and retrieve the "black boxes". However, Norway categorically refused to comply with the requirements put forward by the Soviet side. Fearing that the rest of the NATO member countries would be involved in the escalation process, the USSR was forced to concede and not put pressure on Norway on the issue of opening the "black boxes" of the crashed aircraft.

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91 Arlov, Thor B., E. Dieva, and Anastasija Komkova. *Istoriya Archipelaga Špicbergen*. Moskva: Paulsen, 2016, p. 482

92 Tamnes, Rolf. *Svalbard Og Den Politiske Avmakt: Striden Om Flyplass, Olje, Og Telemetri-stasjon, 1955-1970*. Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 1992, p. 53

Although the Soviet Union even thought about the need to send troops throughout the crisis. However, Norway at that time was aware of the Soviet helicopter base under construction at Cape Heer (near Barentsburg), where an airspace tracking station and satellite ground station were allegedly recorded. It gave rise to an inspection of helicopter base by representatives of the Norwegian administration, but a site survey did not reveal any violations. In 1980, official permission was obtained to begin its operation. Nevertheless, the Norwegians were absolutely sure that until the collapse of the Soviet Union, this helicopter base was a dual-use facility and was used directly in the interests of the Northern Fleet (which violated Article 9 of the 1920 Treaty). It is important to clarify that the incident investigation process on Hopen Island lasted until April 1979.<sup>93</sup>

The Hopen crisis was one of the most serious crises of the Cold War, even more serious than it was announced to the public in 1978. The government was under cross pressure between the unusually aggressive Soviet Union on the one hand, and supporters of security policy in Norway and beyond, on the other. However, it is important to understand that the interest of military intelligence in Svalbard has become less and less urgent over time. This is primarily due to the weakening of tensions between the West and the East. According to Thor B. Arlov, the decline of interest in military intelligence in Svalbard was due to technological advances and the invention of electronic and satellite surveillance systems.<sup>94</sup> The presence of a large number of civilian and military satellites that pass over the Arctic greatly complicates the ability to hide any activity on land or at sea.

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93 NRK.no, “Iskaldt kappløp”, published February 8, 2015 by Ståle Hansen. URL: <https://www.nrk.no/dokumentar/xl/iskaldt-kapplop-1.12181209>

94 Arlov, Thor B., E. Dieva, and Anastasija Komkova. *Istorija Archipelaga Špicbergen*. Moskva: Paulsen, 2016, p. 486

## **Conclusion**

The thesis has discussed disputes between Norway and Russia concerning the status of Svalbard during World War II and the Cold War. A number of factors have been considered in the master's thesis, which directly played a role in this relationship.

The Second World War and the first decade after it became an extremely important period in the development of Soviet-Norwegian relations, which was determined both by the trends in world politics in general and in international relations of Norway in particular. The beginning of an active change in the external relations of Norway was the German aggression of 1940, which led to the collapse of Norway's neutrality. The content and nature of the evolution of Soviet-Norwegian political relations were influenced by global political processes and trends, primarily such as the formation of the Yalta-Potsdam system, the formation of a bipolar world in the context of the Cold War, and the development of global and regional organizations for cooperation and security.

The first chapter dealt with the importance of the Norwegian territories in the context of global military and political processes during the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War. The outbreak of World War II brought to the fore the colossal military strategic importance of Spitsbergen. The new situation called into question the feasibility of maintaining the demilitarized status of the archipelago prescribed in Article 9 of the 1920 Svalbard Treaty. During World War II, the territorial aspects of relations between Norway and the Soviet Union were embodied in such matters as the provision of ports to the Soviet Union in Northern Norway and the revision of Svalbard status in 1944. Norwegian government agreed to consider the issue of the joint defense of Svalbard and discussed the revision of the Svalbard Treaty. Although both sides generally supported such a proposal, subsequent events of the first post-war year did not allow it to be implemented.

In addition, the first chapter contained key processes for the development of Norwegian foreign policy, which determined the course and content of Soviet-Norwegian relations in the postwar years. The concept of "bridge-building" policy was a phenomenon brought about by the neutralist sentiments of Norwegian society, current ideological attitudes, and recognition of the sharply increased role of the USSR in international relations after the war. In the framework of the new policy, negotiations on Svalbard were continued in the post-war years, but it was concluded that, on the initiative of Norway, the negotiations on Svalbard were gradually phased out, while the Soviet Union had no arguments to continue the discussion.



Thus, although the leadership of the USSR realized the importance of continuing negotiations on Svalbard, they did not, however, take significant actions to achieve them. After analyzing the sources, it can be argued that the policy of Norway in the matter of protecting its rights to Svalbard was more effective than the policy of the USSR in the desire to obtain special rights in this region. It seems that the reason for this was the lack of decent human resources in the USSR that could contribute to the necessary policies in Norway or influence the opinions of state and party leaders in this country. The Soviet Union practically did not take any active steps to resolve important issues in bilateral relations, but we can rather talk about the retardation of the reaction of the Soviet Union and its loss of control over the situation, which in the future led to the abolition of the policy of "building bridges" and rapprochement with the West.

The second chapter is devoted to the complete completion of the policy of "bridge-building" in the foreign policy of Norway and its change in the direction of establishing relations with Western partners. The first signs of friction and disagreement in Soviet-Norwegian relations can be attributed to the end of March 1948, when public opinion and party circles in Norway were excited by the events in Czechoslovakia. Despite attempts by the Soviet Union to continue to impose its non-aggression treaty and revise the 1920 Svalbard Treaty, Norway refused and moved in its foreign policy towards establishing security by discussing important issues at the UN, adopting the Marshall Plan, trying to create a Scandinavian Union and joining eventually to NATO. In its policy, however, Norway continued to be a "good neighbor" to the Soviet Union. Crisis situations of this period were quickly settled by the Norwegian side. So, we can recall the Soviet Union's attempt to create a problem around the contradiction between the two treaties concerning Svalbard - Paris 1920 and North Atlantic 1949. The first of them obliged Norway, among other things, to never allow the creation of military or naval bases on the archipelago, and not to use it at all military purposes. The Washington Treaty of 1949 obliged the signatory countries to increase their ability to repel aggression, including not only in their continental but also in island territories, in accordance with the measures established in the same agreement. However, the Norwegian side announced that the Soviet Union should not be afraid of the militarization of the Svalbard archipelago. As a result, the establishment of a certain status quo in relations between the USSR and Norway was confirmed by the official visit of E. Gerhardsen to the USSR in 1955 - the first of the visits by the Scandinavian Prime Ministers of the Soviet Union.

The third chapter described some of the main crisis situations that arose between Norway and the Soviet Union around the problem of the Svalbard archipelago. The Soviet Union in its policy continued to insist that Norway complied with Article 9 of the Svalbard Treaty. The issue of

security on the archipelago was raised by the Soviet side during the construction of ESRO radars in the 60s. The wariness of the USSR in this matter is quite logical and expected, because, according to the advice, the radars could be used not only for scientific purposes but also, for example, to aim using ballistic missiles or use them for reconnaissance. Norwegians, however, continued to pursue an open policy with the Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War. This could be seen at the invitation of Soviet specialists at the ESRO radar inspection. The second challenge in international relations, already from the side of the Soviet Union, was the crisis around the situation with the crash of the Tu-16 Northern Fleet reconnaissance aircraft on August 28, 1978, on the island of Hopen, which is part of the Spitsbergen archipelago. The Soviet leadership did their best to put pressure on Norway in order not to gain access to the black boxes of the crashed plane. The situation then escalated to such an extent that the USSR ambassador to Norway even threatened the introduction of troops into Norway, however, in order to prevent the escalation and involvement of NATO countries in possible hostilities. The USSR agreed to the study of aircraft recorders. In addition, the chapter described the establishment in 1977 of a 200-mile exclusive economic zone around Svalbard

These are not the only crisis situations that arose around Svalbard during the Cold War. However, they were taken to show that, in general, despite the active "alarmization" of the Soviet military threat in the Arctic as a whole, the development of the situation around Svalbard in the future was positive.

The end of the Cold War put an end to the military confrontation in the Arctic, and Svalbard can no longer be perceived as a knot of military-political tension (even if there are disagreements between Russia and Norway on some aspects of cooperation in the Arctic).

It is important to note that the huge array of documents that could better describe the history of the development of relations between Norway and the Soviet Union about the Svalbard problem from the middle and end of the Cold War period is still classified. This leaves it possible in the future to look at these relations from a completely different angle and discover important new factors.

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