



Online Only

JÖRG-DIETRICH NACKMAYR

The Arctic

A test site for a new, global geopolitical architecture with the focus on China's role

Abstract

This text investigates what effect the melting and possible disappearance of the Arctic ice shelf during the coming decades will have on the geopolitical balance in the far North and which conflicts could result therefrom. The analysis will focus on China.

Table of contents

	Page
Abstract	1
Table of contents	2
Why the Arctic is so interesting	3
Arctic Geopolitics	3
Arctic Conflict Potentials	5
Greenland's Importance for the Arctic	7
China's Interest in Iceland	14
Greenland and Iceland, a 21st Century Melos?	17
Endnotes	19

Why The Arctic Is So Interesting

This text investigates what effect the melting and possible disappearance of the Arctic ice shelf during the coming decades will have on the geopolitical balance in the far North and which conflicts could result therefrom.[1] The analysis will focus on China. Up to now, China's appearance on the Arctic scene has not been adequately reflected in publications. During a continuous stay of many years in Iceland, the author became aware of a development which was yet to attract wider attention. The question is: what effects could the appearance of a power alien to the region of the far North have on its geopolitical architecture, as well as on the transatlantic lines of communication. This question was first posed in a short essay written in February 2013 by Paula Briscoe, National Intelligence Fellow at the USA Council on Foreign Relations: Greenland - China's Foothold in Europe?[2] This addresses a strategic dimension which will be of vital importance for the future of transatlantic geopolitics. In spite of this, most authors have focused mainly on the analysis of the current conflict potential between Russia and the West.[3] Incredibly, China's appearance and the concomitant effects on the Arctic chess board remain overlooked.

Arctic Geopolitics

Geopolitics is back on the agenda.[4] It deals with power projections in geographical areas[5] and is - especially in the Arctic, a still almost uninhabited area, yet geographically well-placed and rich in resources[6] - a suitable, analytical blueprint to understand the race which will change and shape the world.[7]

Whereas the South Pole is a quasi-uninhabited continent surrounded by the sea, during the past decades (at least during the summer months) a navigable ocean has appeared in the area of the North Pole, which is surrounded by the Eurasian and North American landmasses.[8] Geographically, Russia controls more than 50% of the Arctic and is especially affected by the developments that can be expected.[9] Russia regards itself as THE Arctic power and derives its national identity also from its geographical roots in the high North.[10] The largest part of Russia lies north of the 50th parallel, the USA ends at the 49th. The majority of Russians lives further north than the majority of Canadians, most of whom reside close to the US border. In Russia's north, access to the sea is still blocked for most of the year by Arctic ice. It is therefore not surprising that Russia closely observes the expected changes in the global climate, as Arctic living conditions will change far more than those in other climes.[11]

Geopolitically, there is a coast - opposite coast dilemma, the objects of political and economic desire being Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), Iceland, and the exclusive control of Arctic waters; not only because there are massive deposits of raw materials in and around Greenland[12], but also because Greenland and Iceland aim for far-reaching autonomy and may soon confront the geopolitical players

as independent states. By ending negotiations on EU membership, Iceland has chosen a path that attempts to combine a maximum of economic benefit to be drawn from the European Economic Area and Schengen with a minimum of influence exerted by supranational European organisations. The politicians currently governing Iceland attach great importance to a room for manoeuvre that is as big as possible, and therefore support a multi-vector policy which aims at relations that are equally close with China as they are with the US, as well as with Russia and the EU. Iceland may security-politically be a part of NATO and linked to the USA via a bilateral defence agreement from 1951[13], but the traditionally pacifist public's reservations following the surprising disestablishment of Keflavik Naval Air Station in 2006 have only been postponed. If a generation of politicians not convinced of the advantages of a transatlantic partnership were to come to the decision to leave the Alliance, global repercussions would be the result.[14] How pertinent this question could become in the future might be shown if Jon Gnarr, the former mayor of Reykjavik, were to be elected president. It is likely that he would continue the pacifist policies he had made his trademark during his time as mayor of the capital. Gnarr, a comedian by trade, banned the foreign naval units that traditionally used to be a part of Reykjavik harbour to a port on the outskirts in order to illustrate his vision of a pacifist, arms-free Iceland. An exception, however, was made for the ships of the Iceland Coast Guard and the frigates of the Danish Navy, which regularly moor in Reykjavik and which patrol the waters around Iceland. Gnarr, whom opinion polls give excellent chances of succeeding the incumbent president could even be encouraged, together with a left-wing government that succeeds the present conservative one, to cut transatlantic links completely. The great, peace-loving China and Russia, always concerned for Iceland's safety, will certainly find excellent arguments which some circles in Iceland will be more than happy to believe.

This naïveté vis-à-vis the eastern great powers seems to be quite traditional in Iceland. There is the persistent rumour that long-term President Grimsson offered Keflavik airport to Russia following the negotiations on a Russian loan at the beginning of the 2008 financial crisis. Grimsson also attracted attention during an event celebrating the establishment of diplomatic relations between Iceland and Russia by referring to St Petersburg as the natural capital of the Arctic.[15] Not only US circles were so alarmed that in 2015 numerous events and measures took place to intensify transatlantic relations.[16] This reassessment was set in motion by an article on Breitbart in summer 2014, according to which Russia and China wanted to transform Iceland into a secret weapon against the USA.[17]

This challenge is also addressed in Martin Breum's study *The Greenland Dilemma*[18], which was translated only in March 2015 by the Royal Danish Defence College and published on its official website. Startled by the Greenland government under Aleqa Hammond, which had set itself the goal of political independence from Denmark within a generation, the Danish armed forces are now publicly

positioning themselves to counter this development. In a March 2014 interview, the Danish Foreign Minister Martin Lidegaard was surprisingly frank about what was at stake for Copenhagen: “We have a greater presence in Beijing and Washington and Berlin because of Greenland. That’s what makes Danish foreign policy unique. (...) Denmark is bigger and more important with Greenland than we are without. It is in our interest to defend that unity.”[19] And this is also the explanation for the (now) public debate on the future of Danish-Greenland relations. In a 2013 interview, the Commandant of the Royal Danish Defence College, Rear Admiral Nils Wang, explained why Copenhagen went on the media offensive: “A power vacuum will always be filled. If other countries came to believe that Greenland would soon start planning for the day that Greenland was no longer a part of Denmark, and in the process Denmark’s position in the world would be weakened.”[20] These developments are the blueprint from which we can now begin the study of facts. It is remarkable that these tectonic changes have remained uncharted in the German speaking world.

Arctic Conflict Potentials[21]

The Canadian[22] and Russian representatives for the Arctic repeat, again and again, that there are neither open territorial claims nor unclear borders in the Arctic, and that, therefore, there is also no race for resources[23], as stated, mantra-like, by Artur Chilingarov, Special Representative to the President of the Russian Federation on International Cooperation in the Arctic and Antarctic, at the Arctic Circle conferences, and recently even by Sergey Lavrov[24], the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. However, the opposite holds true[25]. Canada[26] is working on a special regime under international law for the North West Passage (NWP) running along its coastline. This, however, is criticised by the USA and the EU, which regard the NWP as an international strait, pursuant to Article 34 ff of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Free passage on a possibly ice-free Arctic Ocean is an important object of legal protection for Germany as well.[27] How difficult border disputes can be, even between members of the same defence alliance, is shown by the dispute between Denmark and Canada over Hans Island, which dragged on for decades and was only defused through a diplomatic ruse.[28] Nevertheless, the question of who owns the island has not yet been decided, it has only been postponed. This uninhabited island boasts a strategically important position on the way from the Arctic to the Atlantic Ocean, on the border between Canada and Greenland, in the middle of the NWP. A further conflict could erupt over the sovereignty of Svalbard, which may have been a formal part of Norway since the 1920 Svalbard Treaty, but grants all citizens of the signatory states equal rights.[29] Norway regards the Treaty as giving it full sovereignty over the surrounding marine area, which is disputed by, inter alia, Russia.[30] The result is that within the Exclusive Economic Zone (200 nautical miles), created by law on 3 June 1977, pursuant to the United

Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, there have been numerous incidents with fishing trawlers of other nations. Apart from the fishing grounds, it is the natural resources that whet the appetite.

The resolved dispute between Norway and Russia concerning maritime boundaries on their common northern border - the point at issue was an area the size of Germany - shows how full of conflict such negotiations are. In its agreement with Russia, Norway departed from the equidistance principle, according to which maritime boundaries run along a median line equidistant from the shores, and made great concessions.[31] This was especially criticised within NATO, as it was suspected that this had created precedence for further Russian demands. What effects this departure from a basic principle of international law will have in future cannot be gauged yet. Tensions between Russian and Norway have since also reached the local level, as was reported by the BBC recently. The owners of the Norwegian internet newspaper Barents Observer seem to have been 'convinced' by interventions of the Russian FSB security agency to replace the editor-in-chief Thomas Nilsen, who was respected, but also critical of Russia.[32]

Much more complex, however, are all the questions pertaining to the application of a principle, which makes the continental shelf theory, i.e. the extension of land masses below the sea, the measure of things in answering the question of how far national territory reaches into the Arctic sea.[33] Especially Russia states that the so-called Lomonosov Ridge represents the direct, albeit underwater, tectonic extension from the New Siberian Islands far beyond the Pole and therefore proves Russian territorial claims.[34] Russia's flag-raising on the sea bed at a depth of almost 5,000 metres at the North Pole in 2007 was to help support this claim. Canada[35], but also Denmark[36] (with Greenland territory), make similar claims extending up to the North Pole[37], with the result that the areas under the sea could be declared national territory.[38] This would mean that exclusive mining rights are a national responsibility, which would exclude any neighbouring countries. How this conflict over territorial claims can be defused and settled, is open to speculation.[39] A settlement is vital, though, for the peaceful use of the Arctic's transit routes and resources. It is quite possible that these questions will be settled one day in accordance with the might is right principle.[40]

The head of the Russian think-tank Centre for Strategic Studies, Iwan Konowalow, already fears an escalation: "This is the beginning of a serious military-diplomatic dispute. Not only the Arctic states such as Canada, Russia, the USA, Norway, and Denmark, but also countries outside of the region are a part of it. There is no doubt that China will also come in, but also other countries that wish to gain access to the Arctic resources. On the diplomatic level, the rhetoric will be very tough. Who, however, does not have a military component in the diplomatic battle will always lose." [41]

This Russian approach - threatening military power[42] - is in clear violation of the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration[43] in which the five coastal states of the Arctic Ocean pledged to resolve conflicts peacefully and within the framework of international law. There has been much speculation about what would happen if Russia did not accept arbitration in an international legal dispute. Russia's neo-military course should be taken extremely seriously, especially following its annexation of the Crimea in violation of international law, and its continuing attempts at destabilisation in parts of eastern Ukraine and other areas of eastern Europe. The establishment of an Arctic Joint Strategic Command on 1 December 2014[44] are proof of the planned militarisation of the area through an expansion of military means[45] for the coming diplomatic disputes.[46] Russia's large manoeuvres in the Arctic in March 2015, incorporating 40,000 soldiers, 220 military aircraft and other weapon systems, gave a first taste of the military dimensions the West[47], but also China, can expect in the future.[48] For Germany, an increase in military conflict resolution scenarios could develop into an extremely awkward situation. Germany's cross-party creed that international crises are best resolved by legal norms, compromises, as well as endless rounds of talks in multilateral organisations, could very soon, also in the Arctic, be hit by an icy blast of realpolitik. If Germany were to be forced, in a conflict between its Arctic NATO partners and Russia, to choose between solidarity with the Alliance and a privileged energy partnership with Russia, political Berlin will be face with very difficult times.

Greenland's Importance for the Arctic

Greenland's future is of utmost importance for the geopolitical balance in the Arctic. According to reliable geological estimates, the world's largest island, covering an area six times the size of Germany and 26 times that of Austria huge raw material deposits, among these rare earths, uranium, minerals, oil and gas. It is inhabited by no more than 60,000 people, and today's inhabitants, the Inuit, have, since 1000 A.D., not only prevailed over the previous inhabitants, who were part of the Dorset Culture, but also over the Vikings, who had been contemporaneous inhabitants of Greenland's south-west. At first the Dorset Culture was pushed out by the Inuit, later the Vikings disappeared from Greenland in the middle of the sixteenth century – for reasons which are still not fully understood today.[49]

King Christian IV of Denmark carried out three Greenland expeditions at the beginning of the seventeenth century, in the course of which Scandinavians again began to settle on the island. Greenland became a part of Denmark in the nineteenth century. Since 1862 the indigenous people have been slowly integrated into the administration. At present, Greenland is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark. Even so, the call for full independence is still ringing out, something that has been – theoretically – possible since gaining self-rule in 2009. The raw material deposits, untouched as yet, and the question of who should mine them play an essential part in this, as they are to finance the independence aspired to. At present, Greenland receives an annual block grant of 500

million euros from Denmark, and approximately 30 million euros from the European Union to develop the education sector. This is a part of the € 217.8 million grant within the framework of the 2014-2020 EU-Greenland partnership agreement.[50] The call for independence and self-determination is now taken so seriously in Denmark that also the establishment has been discussing it intensively. Even the conferment of Greenland Christian names to the young princes and princesses of the royal family is employed in order to keep Greenland within the orbit of the Danish mother country.[51] Although economic independence from Denmark planned by Greenland politicians could result in a further disengagement from the former colonial power and in full independence, the authors of a recent study published by the Royal Danish Defence College in 2014 give a rather positive outlook on Greenland-Danish relations.[52] Denmark will carry on working towards cooperation and openness, and continue to be successful in this endeavour.[53] Denmark continues to regard Greenland as a charge it will stand by.[54] A study by the London-based POLARSKI think tank comes to a contrary result – its self-explanatory title: In 2035 Kalaallit Nunaat is an independent state.[55]

In any case, the three-party coalition of 5 December 2014, headed by the social democrats (Siumut), opened a new chapter in Greenland's history. The coalition, which has 17 of 31 seats in parliament and is headed by Aleqa Hammond, has declared the government's main effort to be the intensification of uranium mining, previously only begun in the Kvanefjeld Project (10 km from Narsaq, on the southern tip of Greenland). Hitherto, Denmark had regarded uranium mining as a strategic resource and had reserved the right of veto, due to the foreign policy dimensions of uranium use. Copenhagen takes a critical view of the possible usage of uranium for the manufacture of nuclear weapons, but also for energy production. Inversely, for the Nuuk government, uranium mining is precisely the means further to promote independence, as the legal borders between Copenhagen and Nuuk can be tested, and uranium mining is expected to produce the budgetary means required to finance independence. Preparations for uranium mining are already far advanced. The Kvanefjeld Mine is already advertised by the Australian mining company Greenland Minerals and Energy Ltd as a project which should serve Greenland, China, and the world.[56] It would be the world's largest mining area for rare earths and one of the largest for uranium. As the leading producer of rare earths and monopolist, China's interests are clear, although the world market for rare earths has somewhat slowed down recently. The reason was the resumption of mining in 2012 in the Mountain Pass Mine, the 2002 closure of which had actually created the Chinese monopoly. This slowing of the market for rare earths was only short-lived, however, following the insolvency of Molykorp, a US mining company.[57] China may only recently have lifted export restrictions on rare earths, but would further increase its market position through the mines in Greenland. The possibility of mining all year and the chance to construct a deep water port close to the mine also speak for the project's feasibility.

Apart from Kvanefjeld, there are further, major deposits which could make Greenland the world's biggest exporter of uranium and rare earths, such as, for example, Kuannersuit, to the north-east of Narsaq, in the island's south-west. "The Australian mining company Greenland Minerals and Energy Ltd. (GME), which is licensed to mine in Kuannersuit, estimates the uranium deposit at 232,000 tons of uranium oxide. Another estimate puts the uranium deposit for the whole Ilimaussaq-complex, of which Kuannersuit is a part, at as much as 600,000 tons of uranium. GME has stressed that if the company is not allowed to extract the uranium it will give up its mining operations at Kuannersuit altogether. If the annual production is as substantial as projected in the 2010 GME financial report – 3,895 tons – Kuannersuit will be the third largest uranium mine and the second largest open pit uranium mine in the world. Only the McArthur River mine in Canada and Ranger in Australia will be bigger. According to the most recent GME estimates, the mine at Kuannersuit will have a life-span of at least 60 years. As the sixth largest uranium deposit in the world, it could provide almost 8% of world production. In addition to Kuannersuit, there are uranium deposits at Illorsuit, Puissattaq, Ivittuut and Motzfeldt Lake in Southern Greenland, Sarfartoq, Nassuttooq, Qaqaarsuk and Attu in Western Greenland and Randbøldal and Milne Land in Eastern Greenland, and there might be deposits that have not yet been discovered." [58] What is not mentioned in this analysis is that uranium mining also means mining for rare earths. Both minerals are very often found close together.

Although it is not only China, but also the European Union, as well as India, Japan, South Korea, and Australia which have shown interest in developing mining in Greenland, it is Chinese companies which, amazingly, are far more successful than their international competitors.[59] On the one hand, this is the result of the financial might of Chinese companies, and also cannot be explained without an insight into Chinese strategic thinking geared towards being able to supply itself with resources also in the long term. Without going into too much detail, it must be stated, however, that current and planned Chinese investments are impressive. Part of these are the iron ore mine in Isua, as well as planned copper and gold mining in the island's centre. All these projects, however, remain high-risk investments, as proven by recent developments: The Isua iron ore project (150 km to the north of the capital Nuuk) for example, had to be abandoned in 2014, as the Ebola crisis in West Africa led to London Mining, a partner, experiencing financial difficulties. The Chinese partner, Sichuan Xinye Mining Investment Corporation, could not raise the necessary investments alone. The Isua mining project also attracted media attention for different reasons, since thousands of Chinese workers had been earmarked for it, which had triggered a discussion about foreign infiltration. A population of 57,000, will perceive 3,000 – 4,000 imported workers from a different culture as an element which cannot be underestimated and a special factor of influence.[60]

These developments correlate with Chinese strategic thinking, as far as it is open to scrutiny. Marc Lanteigne, a China and Arctic expert as well as a political scientist teaching in Norway, quotes and translates a study by the Chinese Army Research Institute, made available to the Chinese public on the Chinese internet on 19 June 2014, according to which the Arctic could become a new “lifeline” for China: “(...) notes on the Arctic as a key source for oil and gas as well as a means to transport fossil fuels and other goods, even going as far to suggest that the region could be a “new Middle East” and provide a new “lifeline” for China. The assessment concluded that the Arctic was on track to become a major energy supply base for the Chinese economy, and that Beijing should seek out partnerships with energy-producing states in the Far North.”[61] This closely correlates with the facts of Chinese endeavours. It had, however, never before been stated in such clarity. China’s endeavours in the polar region’s energy and resource fields have been impressive so far. Apart from a cooperation with Nexen, a Canadian energy company, in the planned exploitation of oil shale in the north of Alberta – a cooperation worth \$ 15.1 billion – more than \$ 30 billion was invested in 2014 in the Canadian energy industry.[62] Chinese investments are also on the increase in the Russian part of the Arctic, with partners such as GAZPROM. Since October 2013, Iceland, as part of a joint venture between the Icelandic energy company Eykon, Petoro from Norway, and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), has also investigated possible reserves of natural gas in the Dreki Triangle, situated near the north-eastern border of the Iceland Exclusive Economic Area in the Atlantic.[63] By way of a footnote, CNOOC holds the majority of shares in this venture and is continuing with the project on its own, after the Norwegian partner dropped out, following the fall in commodity prices. Apparently, strategic investments are continued in China, irrespective of short-term market price fluctuations.

Apart from these offshore investments, mining investments in Greenland are of the highest relevance. Quite apart from the enormous influence which investments of the size previously described have on a community of only 57,000 people, its public life, its decision-making culture, as well as its political processes, the lack of suitably skilled workers in Greenland constitutes an important future topic. Work in the mines will only be possible if specialists are called in. If these were to come from China in their thousands, it would have totally unforeseeable consequences on the island’s social, political, and ethnic developments. The massive overhang of men in China, which makes it impossible for millions of young Chinese males to find a Chinese wife, combined with a spirit of adventure and the material possibilities, could be a decisive factor in attracting labour for the hard work on the world’s biggest island. What if China’s commitment in the mining industry leads to the founding of a Chinese colony within a few decades, which would be the result of intermarriages between Inuit women and Chinese men? What if this ethnic form of influence is even a part of the grand design, on which the Politbureau

of the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China has been working for decades? These issues also require answers.

Questions such as these are increasingly also posed in Washington and Moscow, as can be gleaned from the 2012 Intelligence Risk Assessment of the Danish Defence Intelligence Service: "Both the United States and Russia are highly sceptical of Chinese attempts at securing control over the region's natural resources." [64] The 2013 Intelligence Risk Assessment deals in greater detail with China's economic footprint: "It is likely that China's role and potential influence in the Arctic region will increase as China's economic involvement grows. On a number of occasions, China has demonstrated both capability and willingness to use investments and other kinds of economic instruments as a lever to obtain political objectives." [65] This development has obviously also been registered in China. In China Daily of 16 March 2013, Zhang Yunbi tried to allay fears of a national secret plan behind Chinese investments: "China Dismisses Hysteria over Greenland Ventures" [66].

Another point is interesting. China conspicuously refrains from public statements on Danish-Greenland relations. At the same time, diplomatic relations with Denmark were upgraded with the first-ever visit of a Chinese President to Copenhagen (Hu Yintao visited the capital in June 2012), and the first visit of a Danish King to Beijing, when Margrethe II travelled to China in April 2014.

In the 2014 Intelligence Risk Assessment, Danish intelligence warns of China's growing political influence, due to its increasing economic clout: "Consequently, Chinese political and strategic interests in the Arctic will likely grow in parallel with China's expanding economic involvement in the region. Thus, a commercial transaction with a Chinese business or a Chinese state-owned enterprise could potentially turn political, involving the Chinese government, whose conduct will be based mainly on political interests." [67]

What would be the effects of political independence of Kalaallit Nunaats on the world's geopolitical balance? The creation of a new international legal personality in the Arctic Ocean would increase the possibilities of the world's global powers to assert their own interests in the Arctic. [68] As independent states, Iceland and Greenland would be political lightweights. The danger to the security architecture lies in the fact that powers alien to this region could exploit this weakness, and thereby change the fragile geopolitical balance of power in the Atlantic and the Arctic. In this, especially China's intentions are relevant. There is an iron rule in politics: a power vacuum leads to political tensions.

The fact that China regards its position in the Arctic not only as that of a research nation, purchaser of resources, or user of new shipping routes, was proven, most recently, by the statement of Chinese officials, who stressed China's claim to be heard in future in all questions pertaining to the Arctic. In

this, China not only invokes the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, but also regards itself as a near neighbour of the Arctic, and derives claims from this. These were already stated by a high-ranking member of the Chinese PLA in 2010: “At the Third Session of the Eleventh Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo asked China not to fall behind on Arctic Ocean exploration. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the North Pole and surrounding area are the common wealth of the world’s people and do not belong to any country, said Yin Zhuo, a Rear Admiral and former President of the Chinese Naval Strategy Institute. Yin criticized that some countries are infringing upon other nations interests by fighting for sovereignty over the region, which reportedly has 9% of the world’s coal and a quarter of the global untapped oil and gas, together with abundant diamond, gold, uranium, and other resources. Having a belief in the future possibility of China’s regional war in the oceans, Yin proposed to establish a cross-agency commission focusing on strategic planning.”[69]

The political argument is remarkable: because the Arctic boasts 9% of global coal reserves and a quarter of the oil and gas, the interests of the neighbouring countries must not be put above those of the others. To stress this claim, China has been working for years on strengthening its positions in the Arctic Council (AC): “China wishes to play an expanded role within the Arctic Council in the wake of attaining formalised observer status in that forum in 2013. (...) China cannot seek to become a full member, as it lacks territory above the Arctic Circle, or indeed in any region commonly considered “Arctic”; the shortest distance between China’s northernmost point in Mohe County, Heilongjiang provinces and the Arctic Circle is more than 1400 kilometres. Nonetheless, there have been arguments within the country that China’s proximity to the Arctic region and the effects of regional climate change on Chinese weather patterns have justified greater China’s engagement with any major existing and emerging regimes addressing Arctic affairs.”[70]

However, China should also ask itself if its interests can ever be asserted in the AC. The AC was officially founded as a forum to organise the interests of the neighbours (nation states as well as indigenous peoples), as well as those of the interested countries and other observers. This, at least, is the argument of the founding members. Whoever wants to achieve observer status must recognise full sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction of the eight Arctic neighbour states over the Arctic, as was clearly laid down in the founding documents and the rules for observers.[71] This way, the special rights of disposal of the eight neighbour states Canada, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the USA, as well as their sole responsibility are protected from desires alien to the region. Whether or not this legal nicety permanently manages to exclude countries like China from decisions pertaining to the Arctic remains to be seen, because at present the AC is only a political institution lacking clearly defined rules on problem resolution. Important agreements between individual

members are therefore decided upon bilaterally and not within the framework of the AC, as, for example, the Search and Rescue (SAR) Agreement between Canada and Denmark. Other reasons are that decisions require a consensus, and that there is no clearly defined procedure of how to decide in the event of conflict. All presidencies up to now bespeak the fact that the capitals of the Arctic 8 do not pay too much attention to political work within the AC. However, what Lanteigne describes in the following can be regarded as a consensus on China's aspirations: "With the Arctic region taking on greater global strategic and economic significance, Beijing wants to avoid being left out of future decision-making processes, especially considering that two great powers, Russia and the United States, are full members of the Council and may be moving towards increasingly problematic strategic relations. In short, China is seeking to enter Arctic politics at a time when the region has become both more crowded and more diplomatically unpredictable. Nevertheless, there are strong economic reasons for Beijing to continue to press for a greater role in Arctic politics." [72]

At the third Arctic Circle Conference in Reykjavik in October 2015, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi made clear the three principles of Chinese Arctic policy: respect, cooperation, and win-win. [73] China regards the Arctic as man's common heritage, and wants to limit the neighbours' exclusive responsibility. China especially stressed the protection and sovereign rights of the indigenous peoples, as well as the freedom of research and that of naval routes as non-negotiable. This also applies to areas which are part of the continental shelf. Only if all interested countries could become members, could there be a win-win situation for all people - allegedly. These political goals include a great potential for conflict should China actually be prepared to push through these aims, also in the face of opposition. The appearance of five Chinese warships in the Bering Sea, off the coast of Alaska, to coincide with the visit of the US President to the High North therefore marked a clear break. China attempting to make itself spokesperson for indigenous rights is hardly credible, given its track record with the populations of Mongolia, Xinjiang, or Tibet; it is, however, a clear challenge to the West, also regarding the unsolved questions in Greenland.

How much China's interests have already become a topic of constant interest in Greenland was shown by e.g. the political dispute between the two main parties in the 2013 election campaign, when the social democrats accused the socialists of trying to abandon the rules on a minimum wage for Chinese workers, and of selling Greenland resources too cheaply to China. [74] A parliamentary majority in Greenland only requires 16 votes. The entire island is governed by a political apparatus of approximately 30. The foreign office employs 15 persons. Not many people have to be convinced in order to implement a decision.

Mikaa Mered, a French Arctic expert who heads the London-based POLARSKI think-tank, pulled no punches in his comments on Greenland's future following the parliamentary elections of 28 November 2014: "Overall, the outcome of this election is very good news for investors, especially in the mining and infrastructure sectors." (...) "With Siumut remaining in power ... we expect Greenland to stabilize itself - both from a political risk and a regulatory risk standpoint - whilst keeping the country's march toward independence." [75]

China's Interest in Iceland

China's interests in Iceland also merit closer scrutiny. It is, however, not easy to understand its intentions, as no Arctic Strategy or White Book has been published. [76] At present, China's intentions are neither transparent nor open. At the same time, the mass of facts allows for interesting conclusions to be drawn. Only four years after the People's Republic of China was founded in 1953, the Iceland-China Cultural Society was formed [77], one of the oldest cultural societies in Iceland. Following the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Middle Kingdom and the island in the middle of the Arctic-Atlantic Oceans in 1971, China's Deputy Prime Minister Geng Biao began the tradition of Chinese diplomatic visits in 1979. In 1995, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen visited, followed in 2000 by Li Peng, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress. The high point was President Jiang Zemin's appointment on America's unsinkable aircraft carrier in 2002, followed by the politburo members Luo Gan in 2003 and He Guoaiang in 2010. In 2012, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao paid a visit, and in the following year Deputy Prime Minister Ma Kai. No country, western or otherwise, has pursued diplomatic visits as intensively as China. In 2014, Victor Z. Gao, who had been Deng Xiaoping's chief interpreter and today operates as a chief strategist for international policy, spoke about Iceland-China relations and presented China as a globally leading country of the future. "China is getting closer and closer to the center of the world stage." [78] A few weeks later, and parallel to the second China-Nordic Arctic Cooperation Symposium, there were not only reports on the future of China's Arctic strategy, but also a China-Iceland Joint Aurora Observatory was opened in the north of the island, close to the city of Akureyri, of which nobody can say what else will be observed. [79] China boasting the largest - by far - embassy in Iceland, with room for up to 200 diplomats, rounds off this picture. In comparison: at present, Germany has three accredited diplomats.

The boost in visits since 1995 illustrates Iceland's growing importance for Chinese diplomacy. In a speech given in October 2014 by the Chinese ambassador to Iceland, Zhang Weidong, he also reflects on the impressive list of Icelandic diplomatic visits to China: "On the other hand, China has also received high level visits from Iceland, including Foreign Minister Ólafur Jóhannesson in 1982, Prime Minister Steingrímur Hermannsson in 1986, Prime Minister Davíð Oddsson in 1994, Speaker Salome Thorkelsdóttir and President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir in 1995, Foreign Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson in

2001 and Speaker Halldór Blödal in 2005. President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson officially visited China in 2005. He visited China again in 2007 to witness the Special Olympics and in 2010 to attend the Shanghai Expo. Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurdardóttir visited China in 2013, followed by Foreign Minister Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson's trip to China in June 2014.”[80]

What impresses even more than the intensity of high-ranking visits is the close and complementary political consensus, which is beneficial for both sides: “China and Iceland support each other in the international arena. China supported Iceland's interests in its fishing areas. Iceland appreciates China's position of democracy in international relations and its policy that all countries, big or small, are equal. Iceland supported China's resumption of its legitimate seat in the United Nations and voted for China.”[81] The question must be asked as to what Iceland’s population is to think of, and expect, if China’s position on democracy is supported by Iceland in international relations. One is allowed to ask in which tongues Iceland politicians actually speak when visiting China, and whether, given such statements by the Chinese Ambassador, Iceland should still be perceived as a part of the West, or already as the Far East’s mouthpiece in the geographical west.

The closeness of China-Iceland relations is impressive. Iceland was the first European country to sign a bilateral free trade agreement with China.[82] It was only the second such agreement with a member of the OSCE. China signed the first free trade agreement with New Zealand in 2008. In light of Iceland’s waning willingness to become a member of the European Union, the agreement between Iceland and China was advanced by an ad hoc visit of Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao in April 2012 and signed a few months later. It must be assumed that this agreement is important for China in its pursuit of Arctic interests. It should be seen against the backdrop of a similar development between China and Norway. After negotiations on a free trade agreement were begun in September 2008, they were abruptly stopped by China after eight rounds in protest against the decision of the Nobel Prize Committee to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo, the human rights activist. Apart from ending the negotiations on the free trade agreement, China stopped Norwegian imports of salmon, and began flexing its Arctic muscles vis-à-vis the Kingdom. All attempts by the Norwegian government to explain the fact that the Nobel Prize Committee acts independently and that its decisions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Norwegian government were to no avail. There have been no indications that the negotiations on a free trade agreement will be resumed. Apart from the fact that Norway is the only EFTA member without a free trade agreement with China, this does throw into sharp relief China’s approach to countries not willing or not able to bow to its wishes. Influencing the Nobel Prize Committee is certainly beyond the power of a western government. It is, however, significant that the Norwegian government did not officially welcome the Dalai Lama during his visit in May 2014, which was regarded by western media as kowtowing to China.[83] It did not help. China continues its ban on

Norway. Possibly as a warning to all other new 'friends' in the brave new world of free trade.[84] The treatment meted out to Norway because of fundamental differences in the validation of human rights remains a feared blueprint for future relations between the Middle Kingdom and smaller countries, not only in the Far North.

This made a development public that had hitherto taken place in secret and which some already regard as a new era in Iceland's history: away from Iceland's role as US aircraft carrier to that of Chinese hub, and gate to Asia. In 2009, a 3.5 billion yuan currency swap agreement was signed between the central banks of the two countries, and extended in 2013.[85] There were also discussions on Chinese capital taking on 95% of Islandbanki, crippled by the financial crisis.[86] The intention of the Chinese company NFC, made public in July 2015, to open an aluminium plant in the island's north-west completes the picture.[87] Stronger public attention was given to the plan of Hunag Nubo, erstwhile head of propaganda for the Communist Party of China and now billionaire, to buy 30,000 hectares of Iceland's Highlands in the island's north-east and develop them for tourism. The plan has not received the green light from the Iceland government; yet, according to statements by Nabo, it remains on his agenda.[88] The increase in the number of Chinese tourists, as announced by China, from today's 10,000 to 100,000 per year, which would be approximately 10% of annual tourism, would make the creation of a Chinese SPA and golf paradise in the uninhabited Iceland Highlands appear highly profitable. Preparations are being made in the background for direct flights from China to Iceland. Currently, the route runs mostly via Copenhagen, in future a direct link is to ease access. In 2012, both countries celebrated 40 years of diplomatic relations with a scientific expedition to the North Pole. In August 2012, the Chinese icebreaker Xue Long (snow dragon) dropped anchor in Reykjavik following its voyage through the NWP and confirmed China's claim and capability to use this route in future.[89] China will soon supplement this icebreaker, bought in 1994 from Ukraine, with another one. At present, Germany has a 35-year-old research vessel with ice breaking capability, the Polarstern, which, however, in 2015 had to end its research activity early, due to engine trouble.[90] At least Germany is currently inviting tenders for a new research icebreaker, to be deployed from 2019 onward.[91]

Iceland is not only the gateway to the Arctic, but also to the Atlantic, and lends itself not only to the transport of raw materials mined in Greenland, but also to the distribution of shipping between Europe and America. And China has time. To quote Huang Nubos: "Many people think Iceland is very remote but if you think about it in the long run, in 10 years.... If the ice caps melt in the North Pole, then Iceland property will become very expensive because it's the only way that a lot of ships need to pass to go to Europe." [92] Nevertheless, Nubo has started negotiations in Norway, to the north of Tromsø and in the vicinity of the town of Longyearbyen on Svalbard, to buy land. He struck a deal with a Norwegian landowner to the north of Tromsø, in Lyngen, and now owns a million square metres to the north of

the Arctic Circle; its use is unclear.[93] A further interesting detail was a speech given by Iceland President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson in April 2013, in which he stated that China and other Asian countries should be given more say in the Arctic.[94]

Greenland and Iceland, a 21st Century Melos? Geopolitics on the Lines of Communication

Since 1939, the office of Wilhelm Canaris, the Chief of the German Abwehr, discussed the strategic importance of Iceland, Greenland, and further islands in the north Atlantic. Their strategic importance was also obvious to other map tables. Following the invasion of Denmark on 9 April 1940, the two Danish colonies Iceland and Greenland found themselves in a difficult situation as regards international law. On 10 May 1940, Britain, in violation of its neutrality, occupied Iceland as a consequence of the German occupation of Denmark, and stationed 25,000 soldiers there. The strategic planning of the German Luftwaffe and Navy for an invasion of Iceland (Operation Ikarus) were not continued by Hitler in summer 1940, as he still believed in achieving a separate peace with Britain.[95] How important control of the two islands in the Atlantic was to the outcome of the Second World War is borne out by the history of this war. The Anglo-Saxon naval powers regarded Iceland's and Greenland's geostrategic importance as so great that the USA, half a year before it officially entered the war in July 1941, took over the occupation of Iceland from the British, to relieve the British armed forces.[96] By using Iceland and Greenland as military bases (unsinkable aircraft carriers), control over the Atlantic and the maintenance of trans-Atlantic transit routes between Europe and America could be assured. This was decisive, and without alternative, to achieve the Allied war goals. The strategic importance of the two islands also continued during the Cold War. The political thumb war between the Soviet Union and the West, slugged out for decades, for influence in Iceland speaks volumes and even became a part of world literature.[97] Its Allies indulged Iceland as regards domestic policy, as long as NATO membership and the commitments connected with it were not in any real danger. The Cod Wars between Iceland and Great Britain as well as Germany illustrate perfectly, how ruthlessly, yet ultimately successfully, Iceland could generate benefits for itself due to its role as the West's unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Atlantic. The brutal extension of the Exclusive Economic Zone to 200 miles in the 1970s in a confrontation with various European neighbours is an important political lesson for any future conflicts with Iceland. In conflicts with much bigger and more influential opponents, Iceland will again and again find partners to balance this disadvantage, or employ its important geopolitical position to achieve its own interests by means of shuttle diplomacy in which the one is played off against the other until Iceland has achieved its goal.[98] It is therefore not surprising that during the Cod War, not only the interests of the Iceland fishing industry influenced developments, but also US interests in a larger maritime protected area around its unsinkable aircraft carrier.

Extending the EEZ to 200 miles not only keeps foreign fishing trawlers at bay, but also ships with rather different interests. The USA was also interested in a shielded maritime area.

Observers wonder whether China's massive emergence in the Arctic would have been possible without the unheralded closure of the US military base in Keflavik in 2006. This closure continues to be a strain on relations between the two countries. It marked a break in the trans-Atlantic security architecture and has, undeniably, left a vacuum. The fact that the USA has now begun using the base for ad-hoc air policing missions as a result of increased Russian reconnaissance flights, is registered with serious interest in Iceland. Diplomatic visits by the US have also intensified since 2014. Victoria Nuland, the Assistant Secretary of State, was the first high-ranking member of a US administration to have visited Iceland for a long time. The fact that a new and larger embassy building was bought is a further sign of increased US presence. There had been plans in 2015 for a visit by Andrew W. Marshall, the ninety-three-year-old security policy heavyweight, who was to have spoken to an exclusive audience, as well as a visit by Defence Minister Chuck Hagel in the second quarter. Following Hagel's resignation and the nomination of his successor Ashton Carter, this visit has not yet been realised, just as that by Andrew W. Marshall has not. When the US assumed the presidency of the Arctic Council in April 2015, its presence in the Atlantic lines of communication increased. The fact that it took the Obama administration from October 2013 until December 2014 to fill the vacant ambassadorial position in Reykjavik, because the US Senate had refused for months to confirm Robert Barber, who had supported Obama's election campaign, was also not conducive to good relations.[99]

But also China had its own problems with its choice of ambassador, Ma Jisheng. The ambassador, who had been continually absent since January 2014, had, according to Chinese circles, been accused of espionage for Japan, and did not return to his post.[100] A new ambassador was chosen in November 2014, as reported by the Iceland media channel *ruv.is*: "China's new Ambassador to Iceland, Zhang Weidong, presented his letter of credence to President of Iceland Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson on Tuesday. (...) Zhang's résumé states that he earlier served as China's Ambassador to Micronesia." Hence, a certified expert in maritime traffic and trade, the topics relevant for the future, which will shape the Arctic of the 21st century. If China, as a power alien to the area, establishes itself long-term at the Arctic Circle, it will strongly influence the political gravitational forces. The appearance of a new power in the trans-Atlantic lines of communication has the potential to turn economic competition into political rivalry and, ultimately, even military conflict. Where political claims and political space intersect, lies the field of decision: military, political, economic, in one word – strategic. To recognise this, is geopolitical thinking, to act accordingly, is rational policy. And readers who think in terms of *realpolitik* will more than likely think of the episode from the fifth book of Thucydides' *The*

Peloponnesian War, which tells the story of the island of Melos. A warning from 2,500 years ago that still resonates in our young 21st century.[101]

Endnotes

[1] Willett, Lee, 'Frozen over: Maritime security challenges in the High North', in, Jane's navy international, 117 (2012), H. 10, p. 21-24. One of the authors who capably analyses future military scenarios, yet - just as the majority of the so-called experts - overlooks the Achilles' Heel that is Greenland on the line of communication.

[2] <http://blogs.cfr.org/asia/2013/02/01/paula-briscoe-greenland-chinas-foothold-in-europe/>

[3] inter alia: Christoph Humrich and Klaus Dieter Wolf, in, Osteuropa 2-3, 2011, 'Krieg in der Arktis? Konfliktszenarien auf dem Prüfstand', Logbuch Arktis, Der Raum, die Interessen und das Recht; Kürsener, Jürg, 'Die Nordostpassage: profitabler als die Suezroute', in, Schweizer Soldat, 89, 2014, H. 4, p.38-43; Helga Haftendorn, Arctic Security: New Challenges in a Diverse Region (Aspen Paper).

[4] <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141211/walter-russell-mead/the-return-of-geopolitics>, although he was contradicted in a counter-article in the same edition by G. John Ikenberry (Princeton): <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2014-04-17/illusion-geopolitics>. Robert Orsi of Tokio University deals critically with Ikenberry and substantiates geopolitics through a philosophic basis grounded in Hegelian thinking: 'Order and Change in Global Politics: Accessing the "return of geopolitics"', in, <http://pari.u-tokyo.ac.jp/eng/unit/ssu/articles/orsi20141110.html>. In his book, published in 2013, Robert Kaplan also deals with the return of geopolitics. Kaplan Robert D., The Revenge of History. What the Map tells us about coming conflicts and the battle against fate, New York, 2013.

[5] cf. inter alia the demand by the former Inspector of the German Navy for strategic thinking in spaces. Feldt, Lutz, 'Maritime Räume: Ein Plädoyer für strategisches Denken', in, Marineforum. Ausgabe A: Zeitschrift für maritime Fragen, 89 (2014), H. 5, p. 4-6.

[6] Dean, Sidney E, 'Chinas rivalisierende Partner: Noch ist es nur der Streit um Rohstoffe', in, Marine Forum. Ausgabe A: Zeitschrift für maritime Fragen, 86 (2011), H. 11, p. 8-9. He draws attention to the fact that at present China is the only country to have begun deep sea mining.

[7] Bidder, Benjamin, 'Arktisches Roulette', in, Der Spiegel, 2012, H. 34, p.113-115.

[8] Rinke, Andreas: 'Wem gehören die "global commons"?' Der Wettlauf um noch nicht eroberte Gebiete hat begonnen', in, Internationale Politik. IP. – 69 (2014), H. 2: Keine Offenbarung?, p.98-103. He is sceptical of the chances to regulate or limit this current form of acquisition.

[9] Voronkov, Lev S., 'Russia's new Arctic strategy', in, International affairs, A Russian journal of world politics, diplomacy and international relations, 58 (2012), H. 2, p.140-154.

[10] cf. Recent Russian films, such as Celestial Wives of the Meadow Mari by Alexey Fedorchenko (2012), or Territory by Alexander Melnik (2015), which reflect Russia's arctic identity.

[11] Luk'janov, Fedor, 'Eurasia on its way to the future', in, Moscow defense brief: MDB; your professional guide inside, 2014, H. 3 = 41, p. 2-3.

[12] cf: Royal Danish Defence College, 214, Brief. Greenland and the New Arctic Political and security implications of a state-building project. Rear Admiral Nils Wang and Dr. Damien Degeorges, p.6 f.: "The United States Geological Survey (USGS) estimates that about 13% of the undiscovered oil, 30% of the undiscovered natural gas, and 20% of the undiscovered natural gas liquids in the world are located in the Arctic region. (...) However, it is estimated that 97% of the oil and gas reserves in the Arctic Ocean are located within the already-determined and, until now, un-questioned Exclusive Economic Zones of the Arctic coastal states. As the majority of the known minerals in the region are located ashore, almost all known natural resources in the Arctic region are already legitimately owned by a state." Or, dealing with Germany's economic interests in

the international context: Haftendorn, Helga, 'Schatzkammer Arktis: Deutschlands Interessen an Rohstoffen aus dem Hohen Norden', in, *Internationale Politik: IP*, 67 (2012), H. 4: Zu neuen Ufern, p.91-97.

[13] http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/ice001.asp.

[14] Since March 2015, the Pirates' Party has been in the lead in most Iceland opinion polls. With 35% it would, at present, get more votes than the ruling coalition. This party dreams of pacifism, romantic ideas of nationalising the fishing industry, and regards Edward Snowden as the greatest political hero. cf: <http://grapevine.is/news/2015/11/16/mmr-poll-pirates-with-over-35-on-top-for-past-nine-months/>.

[15] <http://grapevine.is/news/2014/02/26/president-iceland-is-not-well-suited-for-the-eu/>

[16] Among these a visit by the Iceland foreign secretary to the Pentagon on 1 July 2015, in which the importance of the 1951 bilateral security agreement was stressed. <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=129195>.

[17] <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2014/07/26/russia-china-fill-zone-of-influence-in-iceland-abandoned-by-us/>.

[18] <https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/the-greenland-dilemma/id996387129?mt=11>.

[19] Breum, Martin, *The Greenland Dilemma*, Copenhagen March 2015, Royal Danish Defence College, p.149f.

[20] l.c., p.173.

[21] Haftendorn, Helga & Ermes, David, 'Der Kampf um den Nordpol: Wem gehört die Arktis?', in, *Politische Studien München: Zweimonatszeitschrift für Politik und Zeitgeschehen*, 65 (2014), H. 454, p. 6-14.

[22] Dolota, Petra, 'Kanada und die Energieressourcen der Arktis', in, *ZFAS: Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik*, 7, 2014, H. 3, p. 301-310.

[23] Humrich, Christoph: 'Ressourcenkonflikte, Rechte und Regieren in der Arktis', in, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, Beilage zur Wochenzeitschrift „Das Parlament“*. 61, (2011), H. 5/6, p. 6-13. The author did not think - at least in 2011 - that there will be an escalating conflict in the Arctic.

[24] <http://sputniknews.com/politics/20141209/1015646898.html>.

[25] Ingimundarson, Valur, 'Die Kartierung der Arktis: Bodenschätze, Großmachtspolitik und multilaterale Governance', in, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, Beilage zur Wochenzeitung „Das Parlament“*, 61 (2011), H. 5/6, p. 14-23.

[26] It is unclear how Canada wants to enforce these claims. The gulf between defence planning and the expected challenges is remarkable. Diekmeyer, Peter, 'Defending the true north', in, *Jane's defence weekly: JDW*, 50 (2013), H. 20, p. 24-27.

[27] cf. also Ridgeway Khalifa, Daisy, 'Sorting out the far north: Arctic and Non-Arctic players look to law at the Sea', in, *Sea power: The official publication of the Navy League of the United States*, 55 (2012), H. 8, p. 32-35. This UN convention is by no means uncontroversial and carries great conflict potential.

[28] <http://www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/mensch/arktis-kanada-und-daenemark-einigen-sich-ueber-grenze-im-meer-a-870059.html>.

[29] Lage Dyndel, Gjert, 'The political challenge to petroleum activity around Svalbard', in, *The RUSI journal*, 159 (2014), H. 2, p. 82-88.

[30] Oreshenkov, Alexander, 'Arctic square of opportunities: The North-Pole and the „shelf“ of Svalbard cannot be Norwegian', in, *Russia in global affairs*, 8 (2010), H. 4, p. 136-144.

[31] cf. Gaarder, Godrun, 'David und Goliath – Norwegen, Russland und ihre Interessen im Hohen Norden', in, *Die Arktis, Ressourcen, Interessen und Probleme, Berichte & Studien 91*, Hans Seidel Stiftung 2010.

[32] <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34789927>.

[33] Knudsen, Andreas, 'Grenzsuche im schmelzenden Eis: Anspruch auf Teile der Arktis; Zusammenarbeit und Konfliktlösung', in, *Marineforum. Ausgabe A: Zeitschrift für maritime Fragen*, 86 (2011), H. 7/8, p. 32-35.

[34] Fenenko, Aleksej V., 'Russland und der Konkurrenzkampf um die Umverteilung der Polargebiete', in, *MEMO*, 47 (2011), H. 4, p. 16-29.

[35] <http://www.zeit.de/wissen/2013-12/arktis-gebirge-oel-kanada-russland>.

- [36] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/15/us-denmark-arctic-idUSKBN0JTOS620141215>.
- [37] Mazo Jeffrey, 'Who owns the North Pole?', in, *Survival: global politics and strategy*, 56 (2014), H. 1: God and mission in US foreign policy, p.61-69. He thinks the territorial claims have more to do with image and domestic politics, rather than economic or security policy reasons.
- [38] http://www.bnd.bund.de/DE/Themen/Lagebeitraege/Arktis/Bilder/Arktis_Territorien_gross.jpg;jsessionid=5F9EB4857BC03A7F7B7DE84DEEA7F3CD.2_cid377?__blob=normal&v=3.
- [39] cf. Stehr, Michael, 'Maritime Sicherheit im 21. Jahrhundert – der Beitrag des internationalen Seerechts', p. 75 - 94, in, Jopp, Heinz-Dieter (ed.), *Maritime Sicherheit im 21. Jahrhundert*, in: *Demokratie, Sicherheit, Frieden*, DFS vol. 215, NOMOS, 2014.
- [40] The West also understands this climate change dimension, as shown by Britain's participation in the Cold Response exercise of 2012. It was a powerful indication of the UK's strategic interests in the Arctic. In: Depledge Duncan and Dodds Klaus, 'Testing the Northern flank: The UK, Norway and exercise cold response', *The RUSI journal*, 157 (2012), H. 4, p. 72-78.
- [41] http://german.ruvr.ru/2014_04_30/Kampf-um-Arktis-Si-vis-pacem-para-bellum-4568/.
- [42] Mommsen, Klaus, 'Russland gibt den Startschuss: Die Militarisierung der Arktis hat begonnen', in, *Marineforum*, Ausgabe A: Zeitschrift für maritime Fragen, 87 (2012), H. 12, p. 10-11.
- [43] http://www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/Illussat_Declaration.pdf.
- [44] Lavrov, Anton, 'Northern joint strategic command of the Russian Armed Forces', in, *Moscow defense brief: MDB; your professional guide inside*, 2014, H. 6, p. 26-28.
- [45] Boltenkov, Dmitry, 'The Russian northern fleet', in, *Moscow defense brief: MDB; your professional guide inside*, 2014, H. 1 - 39, p.20-24.
- [46] http://www.china.org.cn/world/2014-12/02/content_34201860.htm; "A new Russian strategic military command covering the Arctic region went operational Monday, marking a major move Moscow has been mulling to beef up its presence in the area. The command, which is subject to the Northern Fleet, will exercise leadership over all armed forces of Russia in the Arctic so as to improve structure of the military there, Interfax news agency reported. Following the establishment of the Arctic strategic command, the Northern Fleet will cease to be part of Russia's Western Military District and become an independent operational-strategic unit, according to the report. As more military personnel and hardware are expected to be directed to the command, the missions in the new training year will have to be performed in new capacity, the Northern Fleet commander Vladimir Korolyov said at a lineup ceremony at the fleet's central base in Severomorsk. President Vladimir Putin has said his country will never "surrender" the Arctic area and ordered the Defense Ministry to take every step necessary to protect the country's security and national interests in the region. Also on Monday, Russian Defense Ministry said the air forces will further hone their capability in the Arctic. (...) In October, Natural Resources Minister Sergei Donskoi said Russia was planning to submit another request to the United Nations, seeking to expand its Arctic borders by 1.2 million square kilometers." Valery Konyshev argues totally differently, and describes Russian interests as purely economic and as pursuing a soft power strategy in the Arctic: Konyshev, Valery, Sergunin, Alexander, 'Is Russia a revisionist military power in the Arctic?', in, *Defense & security analysis*, 30 (2014), H. 4, p. 323-335.
- [47] cf. the amateurish attempts by - even - the USA. Insinna Valerie, 'Military challenged by changing arctic landscape', in, *National defense: NDIA's business & technology magazine*, 98 (2014), H. 723, p. 24-27.
- [48] <http://tass.ru/en/russia/783728>.
- [49] cf. Jared Diamond's study, in, *Collapse, How Societies choose to fall or succeed*, Penguin 2005, p. 178-276.
- [50] <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-priorities-2020/greenland-its-way-back-towards-european-union-309496>.
- [51] *RoyalDanishDefenceCollege*, 214, p. 9.
- [52] l.c .

[53] Knudsen, Andreas, 'Die Arktis – Nahinteressengebiet für Kopenhagen', in, Marineforum. Ausgabe A: Zeitschrift für maritime Fragen, 87 (2012), H. 12, p.4-9.

[54]

[55] <http://www.polarisk-group.com/>

[56] http://www.wasmga.com.au/template/uploads/pdfs/20140213_NFC_Update_February_2014.pdf.

[57] <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/finanzen/devisen-rohstoffe/letzter-seltene-erden-produzent-in-den-usa-ist-pleite-13669741.html>.

[58] <http://www.wiseinternational.org/node/4089>.

[59] <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/business/europe/2012/08/06/350050/EU-fights.htm>.

[60] Obviously, China has bought out the insolvent western partners and will continue the project by itself cf. <http://www.adn.com/article/20150306/china-mining-and-housing-arctic>.

[61] Lanteigne, Marc, China's Emerging Arctic Strategies, University of Iceland, Institute of International Affairs. The Centre for Arctic Policy Studies, 2014, p.26f.

[62] Lanteigne, p. 28.

[63] <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/02/business/energy-environment/iceland-aims-to-seize-opportunities-in-oil-exploration.html?pagewanted=all>.

[64]

http://feddis.dk/SiteCollectionDocuments/FE/EfterretningsmaessigeRisikovurderinger/Risikovurdering2012_EnglishVersion.pdf.

[65]

http://feddis.dk/SiteCollectionDocuments/FE/EfterretningsmaessigeRisikovurderinger/Risikovurdering2013_EnglishVersion.pdf.

[66] http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/kindle/2013-03/16/content_16312994.htm.

[67]

http://feddis.dk/SiteCollectionDocuments/FE/EfterretningsmaessigeRisikovurderinger/Risikovurdering_2014_EnglishVersionRV.pdf.

[68] Royal Danish Defence College, 214, l.c.: "Technically, Greenland could decide to become independent through a referendum, and then be recognized as a state by other states, and treated de jure as such in the international system. This independence option is explicitly mentioned in the Self-Rule Act. The main issue, however, is not whether or not Greenland technically may secede from the Kingdom of Denmark, but how to define the degree of independence Greenland is capable of enforcing. The strategic location in the Arctic and the huge potential of natural resources have already given Greenlandic self-rule a prominent "near-state" status in global affairs. The visit to Greenland in 2012 by the head of a G20 state, then South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, without a stop-over in Denmark and without the presence of the Danish Prime Minister, was for the self-ruled territory a clear sign of recognition on the world stage. This was further highlighted in 2011 when then Greenland Minister of Industry and Natural Resources Ove Karl Berthelsen visited China, and was received by China's then Vice-Premier, now Premier, Li Keqiang."

[69] <http://chinascope.org/m/content/view/2391/105/>.

[70] cf. Lanteigne, p. 16.

[71] <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/document-archive/category/4-founding-documents>.

[72] cf. Lanteigne, p. 17.

[73] <http://arcticcircle.org/video2015>.

[74] cf. Handelsblatt 13 March 2013: “Die künftige Regierungschefin will mehr von ausländischen Investoren verlangen, aber auch das bislang herrschende Abbauverbot für Uran und Seltene Erden lockern. (...) Hammond hatte im Wahlkampf dem bisherigen Regierungschef einen voreiligen Verkauf heimischer Ressourcen an chinesische Interessenten vorgeworfen. Dieser hatte unter anderem durchgesetzt, dass der grönländische Mindestlohn für mehrere tausend chinesische Bergarbeiter in einem geplanten Erzbergwerk nördlich von Nuuk außer Kraft gesetzt werden kann. Hammond kündigte noch in der Wahlnacht an, sie werde diese Regelung im neuen Parlament erneut zur Abstimmung stellen. Außerdem will sie eine höhere Besteuerung ausländischer Investoren durchsetzen. Hammond tritt aber auch für eine Lockerung des bisher kompletten Abbau-Verbotes für Uran sowie für „Seltene Erden“ ein, die für Hightech-Produkte wichtig sind.“ [The future head of government wants to demand more from foreign investors, however, also wants to relax the rules concerning a ban on mining for uranium and rare earths. (...) Hammond had accused the incumbent head of government of having flogged domestic resources to Chinese buyers. He had, inter alia, ensured that the Iceland minimum wage can be suspended for thousands of Chinese miners in a planned mine north of Nuuk. During election night, Hammond announced that she would again put this to parliament She also wants to push through higher taxation of international investors. Hammond, however, also argues for an easing of the total ban on uranium as well as rare earths mining, necessary for high-tech products] Aleqa Hammond, however, resigned on 1 October 2014 following a spending scandal.

[75] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/29/us-greenland-election-idUSKCN0JD04B20141129>.

[76] Rainwater, Shiloh, ‘Race to the North: China’s Arctic strategy and its implications’, in, Naval War College review, 66 (2013), H. 2, p. 62-82.

[77] <http://is.china-embassy.org/eng/xwtd/t1200604.htm>.

[78] www.islandsstofa.is/files/victor-gao.ppsx, Folie Nr. 17.

[79] <http://nordurslodanetid.is/en/china-nordic-symposium>.

[80] <http://is.china-embassy.org/eng/xwtd/t1200604.htm>.

[81] l.c.

[82] <http://www.nzz.ch/aktuell/wirtschaft/wirtschaftsnachrichten/china-und-island-vereinbaren-ein-historisches-abkommen-1.18065098>.

[83] <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/norway-shuns-dalai-lama-hoping-mend-china-ties>.

[84] In its analysis of Asia, the western security policy community thinks that China attempts to „die Nachbarstaaten (...) in halbsouveräne Provinzen zu verwandeln, ohne sie dabei militärisch unterwerfen zu müssen, (...) durch demografische Expansion und wirtschaftliche Anbindung immer abhängiger von einer Pekinger Interessensdefinition zu machen.“ [turn the neighbouring states (...) into semi-sovereign provinces, without having to subdue them militarily (...) ever more dependent on Beijing’s definition of interest through demographic expansion and economic links] in, Umbach, Frank, ‘Maritime Sicherheit – Fallstudie Ostasien’, in, Maritime Sicherheit im 21. Jahrhundert, DSF Band 215, NOMOS 2014, p.262–300.

[85] <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/81d100de-73fb-11df-87f5-00144feabdc0.html>.

[86] <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20130815000079&cid=1102>.

[87] Chinese company puts money on table; visir.is - Yesterday Klappi Development ehf and the Chinese company NFC signed a document of understanding on financing the construction of a 120,000-tonne aluminium smelter in a planned industrial zone at Hafursstadir in Skagabyggd (NW-Iceland). Prime Minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson (Progressive Party) and Zhang Weidong, China’s Ambassador to Iceland, gave speeches on the occasion. Plans call for Icelandic parties to own a majority of the shares in the aluminium smelter. On the other hand, NFC, according to the declaration, will guarantee at least 70% of the costs of the project. In addition, it will guarantee the operations of the aluminium smelter during its start-up. The energy needs of the aluminium smelter will be 206 MW. The power is expected to come from Blonduvirkjun Power Station (W-Iceland). A press release states that there will be an estimated 240 permanent jobs in the Klappi Aluminium Smelter and

up to 800 temporary jobs during the construction period. Hafursstadir is just south of Skagastrond. Both Saudarkrokur and Blonduos will be within smelter's employment area.

[88] <http://grapevine.is/news/2013/03/15/huang-nubo-continues-bid-to-invest-in-iceland/>.

[89] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/17/us-china-environment-idUSBRE87G0P820120817>.

[90] <http://www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/natur/antrieb-defekt-eisbrecher-polarstern-muss-expedition-abbrechen-a-1011672.html>.

[91] <http://www.vdma.org/article/-/articleview/1716877>.

[92] <http://www.cnbc.com/id/100666980#>.

[93] <http://www.nordlys.no/nyheter/article7362483.ece>.

[94] <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/apr/16/china-future-arctic-iceland>.

[95] Günther W. Gellermann, *Geheime Wege zum Frieden mit England*. Bernard & Graefe Verlag, Bonn 1995. ISBN 3-7637-5947-6. S.27-39.

[96] cf. Watson, Mark Skinner, *United States Army in WW II*, Library of Congress Catalog Number 50-62989, p. 485ff.

[97] cf. Halldór Laxness, *The Atom Station*. Laxness is a Nobel Laureate.

[98] cf. Katrin Rupprecht's highly informative dissertation: *Der deutsch-isländische Fischereizonenstreit 1972-1976. Krisenfall für die NATO*. Bonn, 2011. On the basis of German FO files the background of Iceland's multi-vector policy is elaborated.

[99] <http://grapevine.is/mag/column-opinion/2014/08/14/wheres-robert-barber/>.

[100] <http://intelnews.org/2014/09/18/01-1557/>.

[101] Thukydides: justice only exists between equals - otherwise the strong rule the weak.