

SUGGESTED READINGS

Greenland and Arctic Security

Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen and P. Whitney Lackenbauer

At a time when many of us find ourselves working from home in social isolation, NAADSN has invited various Canadian academic subject matter experts to suggest core readings on topics related to North American and Arctic Defence and Security.

The internet is filled with perspectives and opinions. These lists are intended to help direct policy shapers, practitioners, and academics to credible open access sources, available online free of charge, that reflect leading-edge research and thinking. The compilers of each list have been asked to select readings that are accessibly written (ie. they are not filled with excessive jargon), offer a diversity of viewpoints, and encourage critical thinking and debate.

[Let's \(Not\) Make a Deal: Geopolitics and Greenland](#)

Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, *War On The Rocks* 2019

President Donald Trump's offer to buy Greenland, a semi-autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, came as a bolt out of the blue, causing global astonishment and no small amount of ridicule. For many of his detractors, the offer once again demonstrated the president's lack of diplomatic knowledge and his tendency to offend his allies unnecessarily, especially once he cancelled a state visit to Denmark upon learning Danish leaders were uninterested selling Greenland. Many of his supporters, meanwhile, saw the president's offer as a potential diplomatic masterstroke that would solidify the United States' position in geopolitically important territory. This article examines why the United States is interested in Greenland and whether offering to buy Greenland helps the United States reach its strategic objectives. It argues that Greenland is becoming steadily more important to the United States due to its fear of Chinese and Russian encroachments. However, offering to purchase Greenland is not the optimal way to achieve American security interests, as it is unlikely to succeed, and even if it did, it would be far more expensive than other, more sensible approaches. Instead, the article outlines the basic pillars of an engagement strategy that would help the United States strengthen its position in Greenland based on shared concerns.

[The desecuritization of Greenland's security? How the Greenlandic self-government envision postindependence national defense and security policy](#)

Rasmus Kjærgaard Rasmussen, *Arctic Yearbook* 2019

President Trump's "offer" to purchase Greenland has placed the country at the heart of world affairs and great power rivalry in the Arctic. Greenland is currently enjoying considerable interest from both the U.S. and China while Russia is increasing its military capabilities in the region. Traditionally, Greenlandic politicians have not been

interested in defense and military spending without civilian purpose. And as security policy is constitutionally outside the self-government's authority the issue has not been high on the agenda. However, as Greenland is actively seeking independence from Denmark, the future of Greenlandic defense has become crucial to understanding its independence aspirations. This article examines how the Greenlandic self-government and the political parties envision the future of Greenland's security framework through close readings of government coalition agreements, political statements and media texts. Based on The Copenhagen School of Securitization Studies, the main argument is that Greenlandic defense and foreign policy is characterized by desecuritization. That is, a tendency towards downplaying the security and defense aspects of independence while instead highlighting i.e. economic aspects. The article analyzes this logic in Greenland's recent foreign policy aspirations and in debates on defense. Analytically, desecuritization is linked to two underlying narratives which Greenlandic politicians use to rhetorically downplay security aspects of defense and foreign policy by referring to either economic self-sufficiency or identity politics of the Inuit.

[Government, Policies, and Priorities in Kalaallit Nunaat \(Greenland\): Roads to Independence](#)

Adam Grydehøj, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Arctic Policy and Politics*: 217-231

Kalaallit Nunaat (known in English as 'Greenland') is an autonomous region of Denmark as well as the only Indigenous territory in the Arctic with a legally established roadmap toward independence. The relationship between economic, political, and cultural independence is not straightforward, however, and Kalaallit Nunaat is confronted by a range of significant political choices related to both domestic and foreign policy—choices that are subject to close observation and comment by state actors not only in Denmark (Kalaallit Nunaat's colonizer) but also in the USA and China. Although the population of Kalaallit Nunaat is overwhelmingly in favor of political independence from Denmark, the territory's national proportional representation system for parliamentary elections supports a large number of political parties representing distinctive constellations of voter interests and ideologies. As Kalaallit Nunaat moves toward further urbanization, greater connectedness to the outside world through airport development, and geopolitical repositioning as a result of evolving USA security policy and China's Belt and Road Initiative, this Arctic Indigenous territory will continue to undergo political change.

[Imagining China on Greenland's Road to Independence](#)

Ulrik Pram Gad, Naja Dyrendom Graugaard, Anders Holgersen, Marc Jacobsen, Nina Lave & Nikoline Schriver, *Arctic Yearbook* 2018

For decades, Greenlandic politicians have sought independence in international politics and economy. Renewed global interest in the Arctic has given new impetus to a strategy of diversifying the existing dependency relations, as a way to put coloniality behind. This article investigates how Greenlandic foreign policy narratives have cast China in different roles that support this strategy. Some narratives are informed by Orientalist tropes imported from Denmark, while others dismiss the very same tropes. Some embrace Chinese partners as crucial on Greenland's road to independence, while others reject China as imperialist. Mainly, China has been imagined as a potent source of material resources (export revenues, investments, labour). Initially, this narrative was employed to support a business attempt to reinvigorate traditional hunting through new export channels. Later, narratives underscored Greenlandic

ambitions as a mining country. Recently, they have backed a Greenlandic search for new solutions to the less-hyped fishing and tourism industries. Besides the promise of material gains, Greenlandic authorities have also imagined China as an occasion for international recognition. However, the sought for recognition has changed drastically, from the time when Greenland's national team played soccer against Tibet to current attempts to negotiate science, infrastructure and paradiplomacy with Beijing and Copenhagen. The analysis is based on media reports, government foreign policy statements and parliamentary debates 1999-2018. Theoretically, the analysis draws on a tradition of analyzing international politics and foreign policy as driven by narratives constructing nation state identities in relation to Others, focusing particularly on Orientalist tropes and anti-colonial alternatives.

[China is in the Arctic to Stay as a Great Power: How China's Increasingly Confident, Proactive & Sophisticated Arctic Diplomacy Plays into Kingdom of Denmark Tensions](#)

Camilla T. N. Sørensen, *Arctic Yearbook 2018*

As demonstrated by China's first and long-awaited Arctic Policy White Paper released in January 2018, the Arctic is assigned increasing strategic importance in Beijing. The central priority behind China's intensified diplomatic and economic activities in the region is to establish strong and comprehensive relationships with all the Arctic states and stakeholders and gradually increase China's presence and influence in Arctic multilateral institutions. This is the context in which to analyze recent developments in the Chinese approach to the Kingdom of Denmark constellation and, more specifically, in the Chinese engagement in Greenland. The article contextualizes and examines the increasingly confident, proactive and sophisticated Chinese diplomacy in the Arctic with a focus on exploring how Greenland fits into this. The main argument is that there is more to China's growing interests and activities in Greenland than ensuring Chinese access to potential Greenlandic resources. Rather, the main driving force is Beijing's long-term aim to ensure great power influence in the Arctic. The article further explores the complex triangular relations between Beijing, Nuuk, and Copenhagen with Washington on the side underlining how further developments in relations between Nuuk and Copenhagen, on the one hand, will be influenced by "the China factor" but also, on the other hand, will set the parameters for how China's role in Greenland further develops.

[Chinese Mining in Greenland: Arctic Access or Access to Minerals?](#)

Patrik Andersson, Jesper Willaing Zeuthen & Per Kalvig, *Arctic Yearbook 2018*

This article contributes to the academic debate on China's growing interests in the Arctic and enriches our understanding of the various economic and political factors influencing Chinese investment decisions in the mineral sector. The article studies Chinese interests in two Arctic advanced mineral exploration projects – the Citronen Fjord zinc project in Northern Greenland and the Kvanefjeld (Kuannersuit) Rare Earth Element (REE)-uranium project in Southern Greenland. It analyses China's different policies for REE and zinc and their different roles in China's foreign policy strategy – the Belt and Road initiative (BRI), which also includes plans for establishing an "Ice Silk Road". Based on a study of Chinese-language policy documents and academic articles from the mining sector, we argue that Chinese involvement in the two projects is driven by different strategic considerations. Chinese involvement in REE projects overseas is primarily driven by China's interest in the strategic resource itself,

whereas decisions of where to engage in zinc projects are to a higher degree determined by China's foreign policy priorities. China has a well-developed and clearly defined national strategy for REE, a resource it considers "strategic," of which the Kvanefjeld project is likely to be part. Zinc, on the other hand, is not a strategic resource to China, but still essential for its industry. Hence, we argue that the Citronen Fjord project is less tied to national resource strategy; instead, it offers China access to the Arctic region and to zinc as an added bonus. By focusing on the mineral sector, the article explores the extent to which mineral interests drive Chinese foreign policy and to what extent other foreign policy interests influence the Chinese mineral sector overseas.

[The Polar Silk Road & the West Nordic Region](#)

Lau Øfjord Blaxekær, Marc Lanteigne & Mingming Shi, *Arctic Yearbook* 2018

In June 2017, China's National Development and Reform Commission officially announced that the Arctic Ocean would be added to the list of "blue economic corridors" comprising a major part of China's emerging "Belt and Road" trade and infrastructure initiatives. In January 2018, this policy was further codified in China's first governmental White Paper on the Arctic. In May 2017, The Nordic Council of Ministers and China formally agreed to strengthen collaboration between China and the Nordic region on five key areas. At the same time, the West Nordic Region (Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and coastal Norway) is increasingly being framed as a distinct part of the Nordic region with its Arctic location, maritime and blue bio-economy focus, yet these countries have no joint Arctic strategy or approach to the emerging Polar Silk Road. On the one hand, China's enhanced Arctic engagement and strategic collaboration with the Nordic region, which includes the Arctic, maritime economy, and bio-economy, seem very promising for West Nordic development, on the other hand, geo-political unease about Chinese investments in the Arctic raise questions about what happens when the large-scale geopolitics meet the micro-scale geopolitics of the West Nordic Region. There is a significant gap in both the academic and policy literature on these matters, and as such, this article targets both academia and practitioners seeking to better understand and act according to developments in this region. Theoretically, we frame the article within the English School in International Relations.

[Governing Uranium in the Danish Realm](#)

Cindy Vestergaard and Gry Thomasen, *DIIS Report* 2015

When the 2009 Act granting Greenland self-government was passed, giving the territory full authority over its natural resources, a complex and mixed legal system was introduced within the 'Commonwealth of the Realm', which includes Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. This system has been further complicated by Denmark's membership and Greenland's non-membership of the European Union. Much of the debate today on Greenland's uranium potential is focused on clarifying issues of competence and authority between Greenland and Denmark, the aim being to move beyond the notion of 'zero tolerance' to developing concrete legislative and regulatory measures.

[Autonomy and military bases: USAF Thule Base in Greenland as the study case](#)

Minori Takahashi, Shinji Kawana, Kousuke Saitou, Yu Koizumi, Shino Hateruma & Ayae Shimizu, *Arctic Yearbook* 2019

This paper examines the history and the points of dispute concerning military bases, taking up the US military base in Greenland (Thule Air Base) as a case study. We incorporate as explanatory variables the politics of the host country, i.e., the relationship between the local political actor of Greenland and the Danish central government, and the politics of the base provider (the United States) and Russia, which is intensifying its military activities in the Arctic region. Concretely, we first clarify the scope of the paper by pointing to the bargaining between central governments and local political actors about military bases - to the elements that constitute the vulnerability of central governments (the substitutability, urgency and specificity of bases), the form of bargaining that brings it under control (integration, institutionalization, distribution), and its balance with the effect of hold-up by local political actors wishing to reverse the asymmetrical power relationship. We then examine the validity of that approach through an actual case: the bargaining regarding the inclusion of Thule Air Base into the US missile defense shield.

[The Greenland Card: Prospects for and Barriers to Danish Arctic Diplomacy in Washington](#)

Anders Henriksen and Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook* 2017

This article examines how Denmark might use Greenland to influence the policies of the United States, based on interviews with Danish, Greenlandic, and American civil servants, politicians, and experts. Greenland is still important to the United States, but not as important as during the Cold War. Thus, the value of the Greenland Card is fairly limited. However, if the US-Russia relationship deteriorates, its value is likely to increase. Greenland and the Arctic therefore constitute an important policy area, which Denmark could use to diversify its relationship with the United States. However, several barriers inhibit Danish Arctic diplomacy, including a too narrow focus on contributions to American led operations in the Middle East, mistrust between Denmark and Greenland and the taboo that surrounds the Greenland Card. The article finally makes recommendations as to how these barriers might be reduced.

Official Documents

Kingdom of Denmark, [Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020](#) (2011) [a new strategy will be published in late-2020]

Kingdom of Denmark, [Foreign and Security Policy Strategy 2019-2020](#) (2019)

Danish Ministry of Defence, [Agreement for Danish Defence 2018 – 2023](#) (2018)

Danish Defence Intelligence Service, [Intelligence Risk Assessment 2019](#) (2019)