

THE ROLE AND INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN REGION

ABSTRACT

In recent decades, significant changes have taken place in the Arctic region. It appears that the permanent ice cover will disappear by the middle of the century, allowing humans to increasingly take possession of the area. Major powers are paying growing attention to the region, and one of the first countries to seriously consider the opportunities offered by the Arctic Ocean was China. China has declared itself a near-Arctic state and is already utilizing the region for trade, research, and strategic positioning. This research examines the reasons behind China's interest in the Arctic and the activities it conducts in the region. The study is based on the Copenhagen School's security perspective and employs a mixed methodology. The most significant part of the research involves document analysis and the review of secondary sources. To support the security analysis, a brief natural science explanation and an overview of the international legal framework are also included.

KEYWORDS:

China, Arctic Ocean, Arctic, Arctic Council, security policy

INTRODUCTION

My research question is: Is China active in the Arctic region, and if so, what are its goals and interests? My hypotheses are as follows. China is planning to use the Arctic Ocean for navigation and trade. China is planning the Arctic Ocean from a defence perspective.

The relevance of my research lies in the increasingly dynamic changes in the international situation in the Arctic, driven by three factors. First, climate change is causing the Arctic ice to melt faster and faster, accelerating the pace of change. The second is that a new polarisation is taking place between the actors of the international community, so that the

region is slowly but surely becoming part of the conflict between the United States and China. Thirdly, the need to meet the growing demand for energy is forcing countries to constantly look for ways to find energy sources.

To answer the research question and to refute or support the hypotheses, the aim is to analyse, contextualise and process literature, international treaties, government documents, newspaper articles, statistical data in Hungarian, English and Chinese, in digital and traditional formats. I have used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods and, where possible, I have tried to access primary sources, but I have mainly been able to rely on secondary sources on the topic under study. The research is conducted in the spirit of European security studies, through the principles of the Copenhagen School. The focus throughout is on the People's Republic of China, although understanding requires the occasional inclusion of other members of the international community in the study.

THE STRATEGIC REVALUATION OF THE ARCTIC OCEAN

International law in the Arctic

The world's oceans are public property, so the waters of the region are *res communis omnium usus*, i.e. areas that can be used by all people and cannot be expropriated or occupied.¹ However, the incredible quantities of oil and gas and other mineral resources under the ocean are encouraging interested countries to push the boundaries of the waters under their sovereignty as far as possible, and the extent of the *res communis omnium usus* may be significantly reduced in the future. USA, Canada, Norway, Denmark and Russia. Currently, these 5 countries own areas that can be attributed to the Arctic, but Article 8 of the Svalbard Treaty

¹ KARDOS, Gábor – LATTMANN, Tamás: *Nemzetközi jog. ELTE Eötvös Kiadó*, Budapest, 2010, p. 134–139.

of 9 February 1920 in Paris, grants mining rights to all 38 signatory countries. In 1925, the People's Republic of China ratified this Treaty.²

The impacts of global climate change in the region

"At the same time (2030s), the Arctic will be ice-free in the summer..."³ This is what David Attenborough said in his 2020 documentary, which he called his testimony. Since we are talking about Arctic ice and its melting, one of the most important factors is of course temperature. In the beginning, the planet was at a high temperature, but over time this has started to cool and stabilise.⁴ Over the last 10,000 years or so, there has been a fairly stable range of temperatures, known as the Holocene.⁵ However, to industrial revolutions and their indirect effects, temperatures and CO₂ in the atmosphere have increased. During the Holocene, carbon dioxide levels in the air fluctuated between 180 and 300ppm.⁶ Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, so if its concentration in the air increases, the Earth's surface temperature will increase on average.⁷

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, parties agreed not to allow temperature increases above 1.5 degrees Celsius.⁸ However, according to some calculations, the current concentration of carbon dioxide (427.42 ppm on 31.03.2025)⁹ in the atmosphere will lead to a 2°C rise anyway.¹⁰ This is important because about 4.5 million years ago, when the northern ice

² THE SVALBARD TREATY

³ ATTENBOROUGH, David: *A Life on our Planet*. 2020, 49:46-49:52.

⁴ NAGYVÁRADI, László: A Föld mint égitest. In: Tóth, József (ed.), *Világföldrajz*. Akadémia Kiadó, Budapest, 2010, p. 71.

⁵ SZÓNOKY, Miklós: A Föld és az élet története. In: Tóth, József (ed.), *Világföldrajz*. Akadémia Kiadó, Budapest, 2010, p. 104.

⁶ LINDSEY, Rebecca: *Climate Change: Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide*. 2020.

⁷ COOK, John: *The CO₂/Temperature correlation over the 20th Century*. 2009.

⁸ THE PARIS AGREEMENT 2015.

⁹ LATEST DAILY CO₂ 2025.03.31.

¹⁰ SZABÓ, Amanda Imola: *Honnan tudjuk, hogy mik a felmelegedés határai? Az éghajlati rendszer érzékenységéről*. 2021.

cap started to form, it was 2 degrees warmer than the average temperature of the Holocene.¹¹ This means that we are unlikely to be able to prevent the Arctic ice sheet from losing its permanent points and becoming intermittent and then disappear. The minimum area of Arctic ice in 1980 was 7.67 million square kilometres, while in 2024 it decreased to 4.28 million square kilometres.¹² The temperature change is not uniformly felt across our planet, but it is important to point out that the Arctic is increasing at twice the average rate of the world, so not only has this led to the reduction in area I have just outlined, but the average thickness of the ice has shrunk from 4 metres to 2.5 metres. The volume of ice has decreased by 65% between 1975 and 2012.¹³ The melting of the Arctic ice sheet is therefore scientifically proven to be a significant melting process.



Figure 1: Arctic ice melt in the past and projected melt rates in 2050 and 2100. Online: <https://www.911metallurgist.com/blog/mineral-riches-of-the-arctic>, (downloaded 01/04/2025)

From a military security point of view, it would also be a major change if the countries of the Arctic Ocean (Canada, the United States, Denmark, Norway, Russia) could no longer rely on extreme natural conditions to defend their northern borders. Already in the 1920s, Vilhjálmur Stefánsson points out that the Arctic is a politically, economically and militarily important area.¹⁴ But earlier, around 2,000 years ago, Seneca, in his *Medea*, predicted that the melting of the ice would make the area of great importance, including for military purposes, and yet it was only during the Cold War that the region began to be used militarily. The US and

¹¹ HANSEN, James – SATO, Makiko: *Climate Sensitivity Estimated From Earth's Climate History*. 2012, p. 2, 13–14.

¹² ARCTIC SEA ICE MINIMUM

¹³ FÁBIÁN, Emese: *Halálspirál a sarkvidékeken*. 2015.

¹⁴ CSATLÓS, Erzsébet: *Az Arktisz nemzetközi jogi helyzete*. PhD dissertation. Doctoral School of Political Science and Law, University of Szeged, 2011, p. 16.

Canada have already designated an air defence identification zone (ADIZ, DEWIZ, NOTAM). Although it is somewhat acceptable in international law that the US, Canada and Russia have already established themselves in the region under the heading of preventive self-defence, the emergence of new players in the Arctic region will bring up international legal and territorial disputes.¹⁵ In order to manage these disputes and the region properly, the Arctic Council has been established, of which China is not a member, but only has observer status.

Changes in geopolitical and geostrategic importance

Energy sources in the region

In today's world, one of the most important factors is energy. There are at least 90 billion barrels of oil¹⁶ and 1,670 trillion cubic metres of gas¹⁷ in the region, according to current research and exploration. The area in question is roughly 6 percent of the Earth's surface, but the oil and gas in the region could represent more than 20 percent of the Earth's reserves.¹⁸ This amount is enough to be a major motivation for countries in the region, but also for other major powers. The extraction and transportation of oil and gas from the region is currently extremely costly and difficult, as the region is still intermittently navigable. At present, it can cost up to twice as much as the cheapest extraction solutions, so it will take time before more intensive extraction begins.¹⁹

China uses mainly coal and oil to meet its energy needs, which together account for about 80% of its energy needs. The remaining 20% is shared between natural gas, hydropower and other renewable energy sources.²⁰ China has huge reserves of coal (roughly 150 billion

¹⁵ CSATLÓS 2011, 19–21.

¹⁶ URBAN, Ondrej: *Future of the Arctic Oil Reserves*. 2015.

¹⁷ DESJARDINS, Jeff: *The Energy and Mineral Riches of the Arctic*. 2016.

¹⁸ KING, Hobart: *Oil and Natural Gas Resources of the Arctic*.

¹⁹ BUDZIK, Philip: *Arctic Oil and Natural Gas Potential*. 2009, p. 9.

²⁰ ENERGY SYSTEM OF CHINA

tonnes)²¹ and significant oil reserves (25 billion barrels).²² However, in 1993, the country hit the point where it could no longer supply itself with oil, so from then China became an oil importer country. In addition, it has been forced to connect itself into the world oil trade, which has accelerated China's modernisation of its oil industry, with the three state-owned enterprises. So, despite having domestic reserves, China still needs imports and has a strategic interest in access to energy resources in the region.

The potential for new trade routes

In today's globalised world, with its long supply chains, trade plays a huge role. To shorten the initial routes, we have tried to build channels. Perhaps the two most important channels are the Suez and Panama canals. An accident in the Suez Canal a few years ago, when a ship got stuck, highlighted once again how vulnerable narrow passages are and how vulnerable they make trade itself.²³ However, with the melting of the Arctic ice, new trade routes are emerging that could turn the course of history in some countries' favour.



Figure 2: Potential routes and areas of natural gas and oil in the region. Online: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/02/ice-melting-arctic-transport-route-industry/>, (downloaded 03/04/2025)

²¹ CHINA COAL 2016.

²² CHINA OIL 2016.

²³ Ziady, Hanna: *The Suez fiasco shows why ever bigger container ships are a problem*. 2021.

There are several routes in the pipeline (Figure 2), but the two most famous routes are clearly the Northwest Passage (shown in red) and the Northern Sea route (shown in blue). The former is the 5200 nautical mile (~9600km) route between the Bering Strait and the Labrador Sea, while the latter is the route between the Bering Strait and Murmansk, which is 4700 nautical miles (~8700km) long. The Asia-Europe route would be 6900 nautical miles along the North Sea route, which can be covered in roughly 18 days. In contrast, using the Suez Canal, this route currently takes 30 days.²⁴ A further example is the Tokyo-London route, which would be reduced from 14,000 nautical miles to roughly 7,600 nautical miles using the Northeast Passage.²⁵ It is therefore clear that a very significant reduction can be achieved between Asia and Europe, facilitating trade links by making transport faster and cheaper. The difficulty of ice compared to traditional routes is not that problematic, as it seems for the first time, since the most famous routes also have challenges, for example political instability and piracy problems. Not to mention that those routes are under US control, while for example the North Sea route mostly under the control of Russia who is currently an ally of China.

MAJOR CHINESE INTERESTS IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN REGION

China's Arctic Policy (White Paper, 2018)²⁶

China states that the melting of ice and snow has given the Arctic a global significance, which means that the region is now beyond the interests of the region, and that the events have an impact on the interests of states outside the region. Furthermore, the document states that the Chinese government is an active participant in the Arctic region, making efforts to promote sustainable development, peace, stability and security in the region.

²⁴ LEPAN, Nicolas: *The final frontier: how Arctic ice melting is opening up trade opportunities*. 2020.

²⁵ CSATLÓS 2011, 18–19.

²⁶ THE STATE COUNCIL INFORMATION OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: China's Arctic Policy. *Foreign Languages Press Co. Ltd*, Peking, 2018.

In the first chapter, international law is already discussed, including the specific rights of action of countries that do not have sovereignty over a landmass in the region. But they do have the right to scientific research, fishing, laying submarine cables and pipelines, exploration and exploitation of resources, commercial activities, mining, overflight, freedom of movement and production. China clearly expects the ice to melt completely in the summer before the middle of the century and the resulting commercial activity will have a major impact on global shipping, trade and energy supply, bringing about massive social and economic changes.

One of the most important facts for the international community is that China considers itself a so-called "Near Arctic state", whose economic interests, climate system and ecological environment (i.e. environmental security) are directly affected by the Arctic. It also underlines its close involvement in trans-regional and global Arctic issues, be it climate change, scientific research, exploitation of shipping routes, resource exploration and exploitation, security and global governance issues. The document underlined that China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, therefore the peace and security in the Arctic is a part of its mission. The document also states that China is one of the most important trading and energy-consuming countries, so the resources and trade routes in the region under discussion could have a huge impact on the country's energy strategy and economic development. China expects that its technology, capital, markets, knowledge and experience will have a major impact on the expansion of the network of trade routes and the economic development of the coastal territories. China also clearly communicates that it declared the Svalbard Treaty in 1925.

The country also highlights its activities in the region. In 1996, it became a member of the International Arctic Scientific Committee, and since 1999 has organised several scientific expeditions to the region, with the research vessel Xue Lung (Xuě Lóng 雪龙; snow dragon) as

an important icebreaker ship. In 2004, China built the Arctic Yellow River Station on the western side of the Spitsbergen. With its research vessel and research station, it has created an observing system covering the sea, ice, atmosphere and the biological-geological system of the Arctic. The document also points out that several Chinese companies have already begun to explore commercial opportunities associated with shipping routes, and that China's interests and activities go beyond mere scientific research. Finally, at the end of this chapter of the document, China expresses its intention to play an important role in the formulation of international rules and regional governance in the Arctic. With the Belt and Road Initiative, China provides an opportunity to establish and join the Arctic Silk Road.

China formulates the principle of "respect, cooperation, win-win situations and sustainability". "Respect" means that the sovereignty of Arctic countries must be respected, but the rights of non-Arctic states to carry out activities in the region must also be respected. China sees "cooperation" as a means to engage in the region's affairs, so China wants to cooperate with both state and non-state actors in multilateral and bilateral channels, in the areas of resource use, shipping routes, climate change, scientific research and environmental protection. A "win-win" situation means that everyone, including Arctic and non-Arctic states, should seek mutually beneficial activities. And "sustainability" means that the activities of each country in the region must be aligned with the interests of protecting the ecology.

The first point deals with scientific research. All parties have the right to carry out research, such as setting up research stations, studying the effects of climate change and ice, in accordance with the rules in force. China is increasing the amount of capital it devotes to research in order to achieve deep-sea exploration, ice-zone exploration, Arctic oil and gas drilling and production, renewable energy development and the development of new types of

icebreakers. China encourages its companies to participate in the exploration and exploitation of Arctic resources by leveraging capital, technology and domestic markets, including through international cooperation.

The country hopes that the development of shipping routes will lead to the construction of the Arctic Silk Road. In order to make this initiative a success, he would like to see closer international cooperation (construction and maintenance), but he also encourages his companies to participate in the construction of the infrastructure of the routes, to carry out test runs so that trade can take place in an orderly manner, and to carry out navigation research to improve the safety of the routes and their logistical capacity. The exploration and exploitation of non-living resources, such as oil, gas, minerals and renewable energy sources, are also important to China. First of all, the document states that Chinese companies must participate in the exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels, but that international law and ecological protection must be taken into account. The region is very rich in wind and geothermal energy resources, and China must also make progress in exploring these and in developing the technologies needed to produce clean energy. China explains that climate change is pushing fish stocks further north, potentially creating new fishing grounds for the region in the future. China supports rational fishing in the region and would support the establishment of an Arctic fisheries management organisation to this end.

Currently, China looks to the UN Charter, UNCLOS and the Svalbard Treaty as the guiding principles for managing the region's affairs, but also recognises international organisations as forums for rule-making. One of these is the International Maritime Organisation, of which China is a member, and another is the Arctic Council, whose primacy in the region is recognised by the People's Republic of China. The Belt and Road Initiative is also on the agenda here, with

China expressing its hope to connect with Northern Europe by building the Arctic Silk Road. The document then highlights that China and the United States have launched an annual dialogue on Arctic issues, an Arctic dialogue with Russia since 2013, and in 2012 China and Iceland signed the Framework Agreement for Arctic Cooperation, and are also engaged in bilateral dialogues with the United Kingdom and France on maritime law and regional issues.

Energy demand

China's 2018 Arctic policy has mentioned in several places that the country has a significant interest in the involvement of Chinese companies in the exploration and exploitation of the region's energy resources. In the light of the above mentioned about energy resources in connection with the People's Republic of China, those words of the document are correct. The development of the People's Republic of China will require the country to provide more and more energy at its disposal, as China's energy consumption is growing at an enormous rate. China's most important ally in the region is Russia, and China can clearly cooperate with Russia in the energy sector in order to secure the best possible conditions for itself. For this purpose, China is cooperating with Russia, for example, on the Yamal Peninsula, where natural gas is being extracted. In addition, the Siberian Power pipeline was built on Chinese credit and China can buy roughly 38 billion cubic metres of natural gas a year from Russia. It is expected that by the end of 2025, natural gas exports from Russia to China will be four times the level before the Arctic Policy and the Arctic Silk Road were announced.²⁷ In addition, the Russian company Novatek has also built an LNG terminal with a capacity of 16.5 million tonnes on the Yamal Peninsula, which is important because China is open to buying LNG.²⁸

²⁷ BIMBA, Gergely: *Kína gazdasági kapcsolatai Oroszországgal, a geopolitikai érdekek tükrében. 2018*, p. 6–10.

²⁸ PLETSER, Tamás: *Az orosz gáz európai eladásánál egyre kevésbé Moszkva diktál. 2020.*

Freight, transport, Belt and Road Initiative, the Arctic Silk Road

Xi Jinping took the office as President in 2013 and later that year announced in Kazakhstan the Belt and Road Initiative, a gigantic foreign policy flagship for China, whereby China will develop a network of trade routes and infrastructure in Eurasia in its own interests, shifting the economic centre of gravity to the region and increasing its economic diversification.²⁹ However, the project's objectives are not so important in the present, due to the first Trump administration's policies, therefore China started to reduce its ODI, i.e. outward direct investment, almost immediately.³⁰

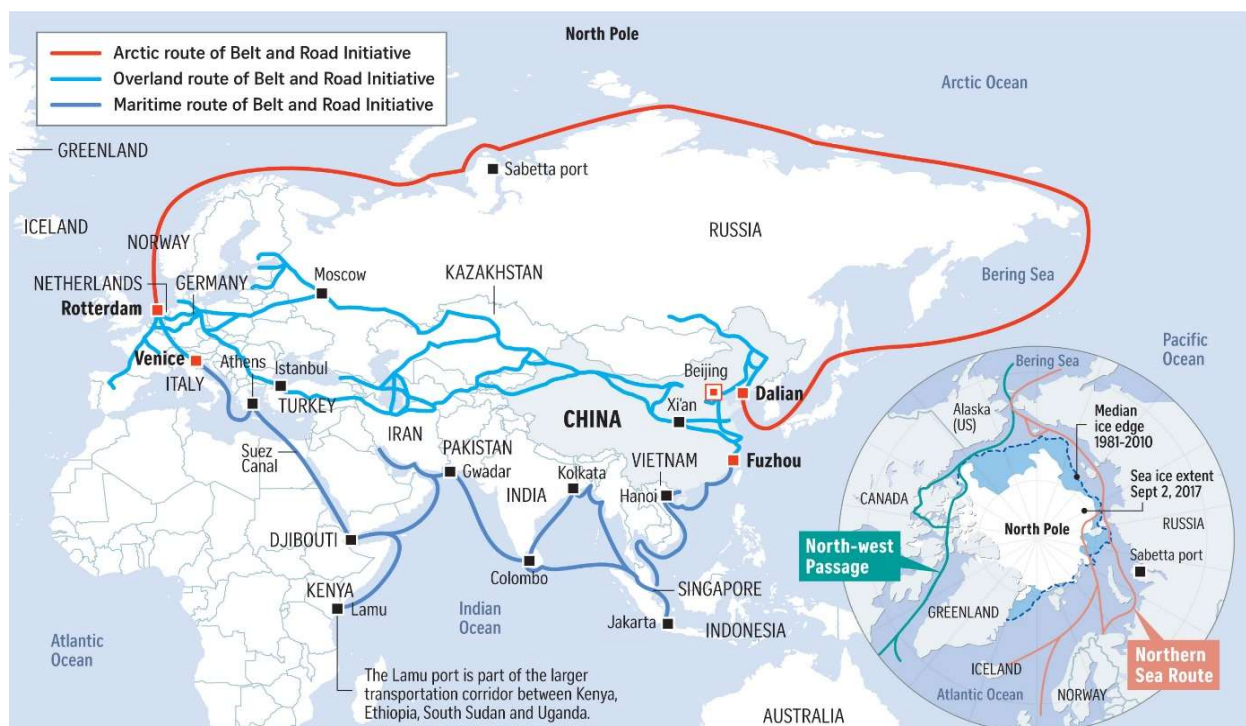


Figure 3: Original routes of the Arctic Silk Road and the Belt and Road initiative. Online: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/chinas-polar-ambitions-cause-anxiety>, (downloaded 26/04/2021)

China has heavily involved the region in the New Silk Road project, namely the Arctic Silk Road (Figure 3), which is part of the whole grand initiative. The document repeatedly highlights the New Silk Road programme and the Arctic Silk Road. In essence, the Arctic Silk

²⁹ Xi, Jinping: *President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech and Proposes to Build a Silk Road Economic Belt with Central Asian Countries*. 2013.

³⁰ KENTON, Will: *Outward Direct Investment (ODI)*. 2020.

Road has similar objectives to its predecessor, except that it will be located in the Arctic region. The aim of the programme is to link the objectives of the countries in the region and other countries that wish to join China, in order to create a coordinated and compatible network of routes. This of course requires that the issue of navigation is resolved. To this end, China has launched a satellite in 2022 specifically designed to monitor shipping routes in the Arctic.³¹ In 2019, COSCO, the largest shipping company in the People's Republic of China, has already made 14 voyages across the Arctic on the China-North Europe route, saving a lot of time and money.³² According to a 2020 figure, 331 ships have already crossed the Arctic Silk Road, moving around 33 million tonnes of goods.³³ The Russian-Ukrainian war has reduced trade in the region, but in 2024 a record 97 ships crossed in a single year, moving around 3.1 tonnes of goods. The trade was essentially exclusively between China and Russia (Figure 4). 95% of the trade was in crude oil and bulk commodities (e.g. grain) from Russia to China. In the reverse direction, containers were very important. Thus, Russia supplies energy carriers and agricultural products to China, while China supplies goods to Russia, e.g. Shanghai-Saint Petersburg.³⁴

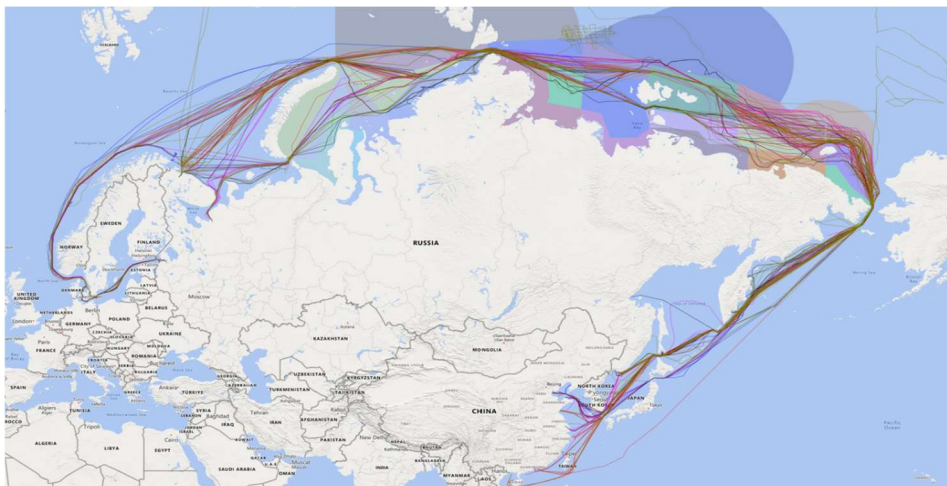


Figure 4: Arctic Silk Road shipping routes in 2024. Online: <https://chnl.no/news/main-results-of-nsr-transit-navigation-in-2024/>, (downloaded: 03/04/2025)

³¹ HUMPERT, Malte: *China to Launch Satellite to Monitor Arctic Shipping Routes*. 2020.

³² HUMPERT, Malte: *Chinese Shipping Company COSCO To Send Record Number of Ships Through Arctic*. 2019.

³³ PÁSZTOR, Szabolcs: *Lehet a Szezi-csatorna párja az északkeleti átjáró?* 2021.

³⁴ MAIN RESULTS OF NSR TRANSIT NAVIGATION IN 2024.

It is therefore clear that China has an important shipping interest in the region, as the South China Sea, the Straits of Malacca and the Suez Canal are not only longer, more dangerous and more sensitive in some respects, but are clearly under US influence, so if China considers it in its national interest to have control over global shipping routes, then the Arctic shipping routes are clearly in its national interest.

Chinese defence policy issues in the region

One important issue is the perception of security. While this can be influenced considerably, the information about how US military officers and diplomatic leaders think is striking: 'I have conducted 117 interviews with US military and diplomatic officials based in the Arctic and the Chinese always come up. When I asked about their threat in the Arctic, although Russia was often not mentioned, China came next after climate change.'³⁵

China's White Paper on its Arctic policy has set off a process despite the fact that there is no mention of China's desire to make the region a defence issue. Former NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has expressed his concern about China's presence in the Arctic in the wake of the document.³⁶ In 2019, the EU's China strategy stated that China's Arctic policy was a concern.³⁷ Later in 2021, the European Parliament recommended that the EU, in cooperation with NATO, closely monitor China's activities in the Arctic.³⁸ In May of 2019, a Russian military expert named Alexander Sirokorad raises the possibility that Russia could provide port support to Chinese submarines in the Arctic and that a joint Arctic Russian-Chinese air and missile defence system could be established. A few months later, Beijing receives an invitation from the Russian ambassador in Beijing to invest in Russian Arctic ports and infrastructure

³⁵ LUHN, Alec: *Freezing cold war: militaries move in as Arctic ice retreats – photo essay*. 2020.

³⁶ MAIR, John – PACKHAM, Colin: *NATO needs to address China's rise, says Stoltenberg*. 2019.

³⁷ EUROPEAN COMMISSION: *EU-China – A strategic outlook*. 2019. P. 1–4.

³⁸ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: *Report on a new EU-China strategy*. 2021.

development in China to secure the Arctic Silk Road, as part of its Arctic policy. An interesting fact also emerges in connection with the element of navigation that is an element of the Arctic Silk Road to facilitate commercial navigation. Version 3 of the Chinese navigation system BeiDou (BDS, 北斗卫星导航系统) was fully completed in 2020, completing the People's Republic of China's global positioning system.³⁹ A ground component of this system is located on the Spitsbergen mountains. Although on paper this system is designed to support commercial shipping, like the US GPS, it can also provide missile positioning, making China a potential threat in the Arctic region. Built to be compatible with the People's Liberation Army Navy, the Snow Dragon 2 (Xuě lóng èr 雪龙二) is China's first homebuilt icebreaker and could be used to rescue submarines. In addition, China, following the example of the US and Russia, is setting up short-term ice camps (bīng zhàn 冰站) in the region, which, in addition to scientific activities, can also serve as training sites for submarine crews.

China is not only planning to build a nuclear-powered icebreaker, but is also placing great emphasis on nuclear-powered submarines, which are much harder to detect under the Arctic ice and could pose a major threat to the United States, Canada and northern Europe. And if China achieves what it has set out in its Arctic policy, which is to regulate the region and make it freely navigable in terms of international law, then legally submarines will also be able to move more freely in the region.⁴⁰ This is particularly important as China has in recent years placed great emphasis on its navy, which consists of three fleets: North Sea Fleet, East Sea Fleet and South Sea Fleet.⁴¹ Submarines are dominant in the Arctic Sea region, so it is important that China has twelve nuclear-powered submarines, six of which (533 mm TT with Yu-6 HWT) are

³⁹ BEIDOU: *China launches final satellite in challenge to GPS 2020*.

⁴⁰ BRADY, Anne-Marie: *Facing Up to China's Military Interests in the Arctic*. 2019.

⁴¹ KLEMENSITS, Péter: A kínai haderő a 21. században. In: Salát, Gergely (ed.), *Kínai álom-kínai valóság. Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem*, Budapest, 2015, p. 154–156.

attack submarines and a further six (Jin 094 type with up to 12 JL-2s) are equipped with ballistic missiles.⁴² In addition, it has developed long-range anti-ship ballistic missiles, which, by being able to change their trajectory in the landing branch, are essentially capable of hitting a moving aircraft carrier and, because of their speed, there is little that missile defence systems can do to counter them.⁴³

Greenland

Although Greenland is still an island under the control of a country, it has become a highly valued territory in mainstream media under the second Trump administration. Although Greenland is primarily an EU-US conflict zone where China is less involved, it may be worth examining China's relationship with Greenland.

In the case of Greenland, since 2009, legal obstacles to China increasing its presence on the island in any way have been increasing. In the 2010s, there were several attempts by China to successfully acquire a share of the mineral resources found in Greenland. China has tried to acquire rare earths, including a stake in the Kvanefjeld rare earth exploration project by the Chinese company Shenghe Resources, but this project was halted due to environmental concerns. China was interested in a decommissioned naval base and China bid for the development and expansion of runways at Greenland airports, but in both cases, China was ultimately rejected. However, these requests were not only made because of China's interest in Greenland, but also because Greenland is constantly looking for investors and has seen China as a successful partner in many cases, so Greenland is a regular participant in Chinese mining

⁴² THE MILITARY BALANCE 2025. *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, London, 2025, p. 240.

⁴³ HAJDÚ, Ferenc – KLEMENSITS, Péter – SÁRHIDAI, Gyula: A kínai WU-14 Dong Feng-21D nagy hatótávolságú hajó elleni ballisztikus rakéta és a csendes-óceáni erőegyensúly átalakulása. 2017. In: *Haditechnika* 2017/1. p. 20–22.

conferences and has sent a business delegation to China. By opening up to China, Greenland has also had the EU and the US start to take a more serious interest.⁴⁴

At the moment, however, Greenlanders do not seem to be afraid of China, but would prefer to see investors from, for example, Canada or Europe. On the Chinese side, an independent Greenland would probably be a better situation, since in many cases Denmark's intervention has blocked certain rapprochement processes. At the moment, while investment interest has waned, trade between the parties remains significant.⁴⁵

SUMMARY

The research question was answered by the research. It proved that China is actively involved in the Arctic region. It is doing so partly because China needs the energy resources, partly because the country can shape Eurasia's trade along new trade routes according to its own ideas, and partly because it can regulate and organise a new region according to its own interests. China is clearly seeking to achieve its goals by diplomatic means, but it is also likely to use realpolitik to build deterrence in the region. China has joined international organisations and propose the creation of new ones, thus improving its position. The first of my hypotheses has been clearly confirmed. China is seeking to use the Arctic Ocean for shipping. Less clearly, but still confirmed, is my hypothesis that China is also planning a defence policy with the region.

China had been expecting to challenge the status quo in the region for years, and moved several years earlier than the other major powers, gaining an advantage in the region. The steps China has taken in recent years suggest that it will continue to monitor the Arctic Ocean region and try to assert its interests. An old Chinese saying - quoting the words of General Zhuge Liang,

⁴⁴ ANDERSSON, Patrik: *China already left - so what is Trump's Greenland gambit about?* 2025.

⁴⁵ BRUNNERSUM, Sou-Jie van: *China failed in its Arctic ambitions in Greenland.* 2022.

who was about to set fire to an enemy fleet - describes the situation rather well: 'Everything is ready, only the east wind is missing' (万事俱备只欠东风).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANDERSSON, Patrik: *China already left – so what is Trump's Greenland gambit about?* 2025. Online: <https://kinacentrum.se/en/publications/china-already-left-so-what-is-trumps-greenland-gambit-about/>, (Download time: 07/04/2025)

ARCTIC SEA ICE MINIMUM. Online: <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/arctic-sea-ice/>, (Download time: 01/04/2025)

ATTENBOROUGH, David: *A Life on Our Planet*. 2020.

BEIDOU: CHINA LAUNCHES FINAL SATELLITE IN CHALLENGE TO GPS 2020. Online: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-53132957>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

BIMBA, Gergely: *Kína gazdasági kapcsolatai Oroszországgal, a geopolitikai érdekek tükrében*. 2018. P. 6–10. Online: https://kki.hu/assets/upload/25_KKI-elemzes_CHN-RUS_Bimba_20180723.pdf, (Download time: 26/04/2021)

BRADY, Anne-Marie: *Facing Up to China's Military Interests in the Arctic*. 2019. Online: <https://jamestown.org/program/facing-up-to-chinas-military-interests-in-the-arctic/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

BRUNNERSUM, Sou-Jie van: *China failed its Arctic ambitions in Greenland*. 2022. Online: <https://www.politico.eu/article/china-arctic-greenland-united-states/>, (Download time: 07/04/2025)

BUDZIK, Philip: *Arctic Oil and Natural Gas Potential*. 2009. P. 9. Online: https://www.eia.gov/analysis/studies/archive/2009/arctic/pdf/arctic_oil.pdf, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

CHINA COAL 2016. Online: <https://www.worldometers.info/coal/china-coal/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

CHINA OIL 2016. Online: <https://www.worldometers.info/oil/china-oil/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

COOK, John: *The CO₂/Temperature correlation over the 20th Century*. 2009. Online: <https://skepticalscience.com/The-CO2-Temperature-correlation-over-the-20th-Century.html>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

CSATLÓS, Erzsébet: *Az Arktisz nemzetközi jogi helyzete*. PhD dissertation. Doctoral School of Political Science and Law, University of Szeged, 2011. ISBN: 9789630593540

DESJARDINS, Jeff: *The Energy and Mineral Riches of the Arctic*. 2016. Online: <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/energy-and-mineral-riches-of-the-arctic/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

ENERGY SYSTEM OF CHINA. Online: <https://www.iea.org/countries/china>, (Download time: 01/04/2025)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: *EU-China – A strategic outlook*. 2019. P. 1–4. Online: <https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2019-03/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf>, utolsó (Download time: 03/04/2025)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Report on a new EU-China strategy. 2021. Online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0252_EN.html, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

FÁBIÁN, Emese: *Halálspirál a sarkvidékeken*. 2015. Online: <http://ecolounge.hu/nagyvilag/halalspiral-a-sarkvidekeken>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

HAJDÚ, Ferenc – KLEMENSITS, Péter – SÁRHIDAI Gyula: A kínai WU–14 Dong Feng–21D nagy hatótávolságú hajó elleni ballisztikus rakéta és a csendes-óceáni erőegyensúly átalakulása. 2017. *Haditechnika* 2017/1. p. 20–27. ISBN: 2399957559852

HANSEN, James – SATO, Makiko: *Climate Sensitivity Estimated From Earth's Climate History*. 2012. P. 2, 13–14. Online: http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/mailings/2012/20120508_ClimateSensitivity.pdf, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

HUMPERT, Malte: *China to Launch Satellite to Monitor Arctic Shipping Routes*. 2020. Online: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/china-launch-satellite-monitor-arctic-shipping-routes>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

HUMPERT, Malte: *Chinese Shipping Company COSCO To Send Record Number of Ships Through Arctic*. 2019. Online: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/chinese-shipping-company-cosco-send-record-number-ships-through-arctic>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

KARDOS, Gábor – LATTMANN, Tamás: Nemzetközi jog. *ELTE Eötvös Kiadó*, Budapest, 2010, p. 134–139. ISBN: 9789633120224

KENTON, Will: *Outward Direct Investment (ODI)*. 2020. Online: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/o/outward-direct-investment.asp>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

KING, Hobart: *Oil and Natural Gas Resources of the Arctic*. Online: <https://geology.com/articles/arctic-oil-and-gas/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

KLEMENSITS, Péter: A kínai haderő a 21. században. In: Salát, Gergely (ed.), *Kínai álom-kínai valóság. Pázmány Péter Catholic University*, Budapest, 2015, p. 146–161. ISBN: 9789632798608

Latest Daily CO2. Online: <https://www.co2.earth/daily-co2>, (Download time: 01/04/2025)

LEPAN, Nicolas: *The final frontier: how Arctic ice melting is opening up trade opportunities*. 2020. Online: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/02/ice-melting-arctic-transport-route-industry/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

LINDSEY, Rebecca: *Climate Change: Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide*. 2020. Online: <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-atmospheric-carbon-dioxide>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

LUHN, Alec: *Freezing cold war: militaries move in as Arctic ice retreats – photo essay*. 2020. Online: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/16/arctic-ice-retreats-climate-us-russian-canadian-chinese-military>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

MAIN RESULTS OF NSR TRANSIT NAVIGATION IN 2024. 2024. Online: <https://chnl.no/news/main-results-of-nsr-transit-navigation-in-2024/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

MAIR, John – PACKHAM, ColOnline: *NATO needs to address China's rise, says Stoltenberg*. 2019. Online: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-nato/nato-needs-to-address-chinas-rise-says-stoltenberg-idUSKCN1UX0YX>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

NAGYVÁRADY, László: A Föld mint égitest. In: Tóth, József (ed.), Világföldrajz. Akadémia Kiadó, Budapest, 2010, p. 63–77. ISBN: 9789630589482

PÁSZTOR, Szabolcs: *Lehet a Szezei-csatorna párja az északkeleti átjáró?* 2021. Online: <http://www.oeconomus.hu/oecoglobus/lehet-a-szezei-csatorna-parja-az-eszakkeleti-atjaro/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

PLETSEY, Tamás: *Az orosz gáz európai eladásánál egyre kevésbé Moszkva diktál*. 2020. Online: <https://g7.hu/vilag/20201008/az-orosz-gaz-europai-eladasanal-egyre-kevesbe-moszkva-diktal/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

SZABÓ, Amanda Imola: *Honnan tudjuk, hogy mik a felmelegedés határai? Az éghajlati rendszer érzékenységéről*. 2021. Online: <https://masfelfok.hu/2021/02/01/honnan-tudjuk-hogy-mik-a-felmelegedes-hatarai-az-eghajlati-rendszer-erzekenysegerol/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

SZÓNOKY, Miklós: A Föld és az élet története. In: Tóth, József (ed.), Világföldrajz. Akadémia Kiadó, Budapest, 2010, p. 78–105. ISBN: 9789630589482

THE MILITARY BALANCE 2025. *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, London, 2025, p. 240. ISBN 9781041049678

THE PARIS AGREEMENT 2015. ONLINE: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>, (DOWNLOAD TIME: 03/04/2025)

THE STATE COUNCIL INFORMATION OFFICE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: *China's Arctic Policy*. Foreign Languages Press Co. Ltd, Beijing, 2018. Online: http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2018/01/26/content_281476026660336.htm, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

THE SVALBARD TREATY. Online: <https://www.jus.uio.no/english/services/library/treaties/01/1-11/svalbard-treaty.xml>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

URBAN, Ondrej: *Future of the Arctic Oil Reserves*. 2015. Online: <http://large.stanford.edu/courses/2015/ph240/urban2/>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

XI, Jinping: *President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech and Proposes to Build a Silk Road Economic Belt with Central Asian Countries*. 2013. Online: <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/p/1849.html>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

ZIADY, Hanna: *The Suez fiasco shows why ever bigger container ships are a problem*. 2021. Online: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/03/30/business/suez-container-ship-sizes-ever-given/index.html>, (Download time: 03/04/2025)

