

СЕКЦІЯ II. КИТАЙ В СУЧАСНОМУ СВІТІ: МІЖНАРОДНО-ПОЛІТИЧНИЙ АСПЕКТ ТА СОЦІАЛЬНО-ЕКОНОМІЧНИЙ РОЗВИТОК

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ARCTICS AS A TERRITORY OF CHINESE INTEREST: GEOPOLITICAL ASPECT

Key words: China, Arctics, Geopolitics, Cooperation and Confrontation.

According to American reports, China has overcome the United States by the number of naval vessels and is already a successful competitor for the American Navy, not globally but at least regionally in Southeast Asia. Currently, the pace of development of the Chinese navy fleet is so fast that it has caused significant concerns for American security and Congress experts. [6; 7] This includes China's extensive ways of building a military navy in warm oceans and an expansion of China's interests in Arctics.

On January 26, 2018, The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China published "China's Arctic Policy." In this document, China called itself a "Near-Arctic State". The document also set a number of key goals, which were:

- Understand Arctics – what means to conduct research on Arctics;
- Develop – the first but one of the most important aims of developing shipping routes through the Arctics;
- Cooperation – create a win-win situation of Arctics exploration and using resources of Arctics;
- Utilizing resources – one of the main parts is dedicated to developing Arctic resources. A separate paragraph is devoted to developing shipping routes in the region [9].

Therefore, we can say that by formal adoption of the Strategy, China claimed itself as one more actor in the Arctic geopolitical arena.

Nevertheless, even before adopting the “Arctic Policy” in 2018, in 2013, China was admitted as an Observer to the Arctic Council, which allowed it to get a platform for communication with the Arctic states and the Arctic Council for a platform for cooperation. Moreover, even before the official publishing of the policy, China paid a lot of attention to the development in this geopolitical direction. This can be seen in Chinese attempts to access more regional infrastructure. On the other hand, countries of the region denied this kind of access. The examples are shown in the table below [1].

Year	Description
2016	A Chinese mining company attempted to buy an abandoned U.S. naval base in Gronnedal, Greenland, but the Danish government denied the sale.
2017	A Hong Kong-based investor purchased an inactive Swedish submarine base on Fårösund Island, but a year later, the Swedish armed forces bought it back.
2017	The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) requested to build a permanent research facility and satellite ground station in Nuuk, Greenland, but Danish authorities denied the request.
2018	The Polar Research Institute of China attempted to purchase an airport in Lapland, Finland. Finnish authorities declined the sale.
2019	CAS announced plans for a joint research center for Arctic space observation in Sodankyla, Finland. The Finnish government reportedly froze the agreement.

Therefore, from these examples, we can see that China-related institutions were highly interested in infrastructural facilities that could serve as a point of stabilization for China in the Arctic.

Many experts see Chinese development and research, which is officially declared as peaceful, as being dual-natured because of the connections between research and scientific institutions on one side and the PLA on the other. [3] Moreover, China has a unique long-term strategy in the Antarctic, which includes economic and scientific approaches. This brings European scientists to the idea that Chinese strategy must be carefully tracked because of possible future security concerns [8].

It is also important to underline that actively develops the project “Polar Silk Road,” which is aimed at diversifying shipping routes to Europe. It might provide the shortest and fastest way to get goods from China. This project became possible because of the greenhouse effect and, as a result, the melting of the Arctic ice, which simplified navigation. Simultaneously, China has been actively developing the buildup of ice-breaking vessels to expand its capabilities in the Arctic [2]. Furthermore, Chinese active polar explorations only facilitate the whole process of the development of the

Chinese Arctic by providing various data for Chinese national and private agencies.

On the other hand, such active exploration and development in the region are impossible without cooperation with international actors who have direct access to it. As mentioned before, most of the Arctic states currently have severe concerns about Chinese ideas of development in the Arctic region. Therefore, when looking for a partner, the Russian Federation looks like one of the most attractive candidates because of numerous reasons, including geopolitical location and Russian technological development for expansion in the Arctic. Moreover, both of these states have common geopolitical interests that are placed in the North Pole and are related to more global ambitions of both states, including military cooperation [4; 5].

In conclusion, we can say that climatical changes make access to the Arctic region easier for different states, including China. As one of the great powers, China has enough resources to develop its Arctic agenda. Nevertheless, even while not having direct access to the Arctic, China actively develops numerous Arctic-related projects, including those that raise security concerns at NATO-member states and the states that are really Arctic states and pretend to access resources of the region, which become more and more accessible to access because of the global warming and melting of Polar ice. On the other hand, China demonstrates readiness to access the Arctic as a military power, which becomes another issue of concern for the countries that see China as a threat in different dimensions.

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