 Polar Record 51 (259): 404–412 (2015). © Cambridge University Press 2014. doi:10.1017/S003224741400028X

Greenland as a self-governing sub-national territory in international relations: past, current and future perspectives

Maria Ackrén
Department of Social Sciences, Ilisimatusarfik/University of Greenland, POB 1061, 3900 Nuuk, Greenland (maac@samf.uni.gl)

Uffe Jakobsen
Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 5, 1353 Copenhagen, Denmark

Received November 2013 ; first published online 9 September 2014

ABSTRACT. Greenland was used by the US as a platform and as an extended arm within its security and foreign policy during the World War II and the cold war. After this things changed, although Greenland remained important in Danish-US relations under the umbrella of NATO. Nowadays, the geostrategic position of Greenland between North America and Europe is gaining fresh prominence in the race for natural resources in the Arctic. Many issues arise from the prospective opening of the Arctic, all of which may have fateful impacts on future development in the region. Climate change, claims related to the extension of the continental shelf, exploitation and exploration of natural resources, together with the protection of indigenous peoples are all current issues that must be taken into consideration in the context of security and foreign policy formation in Greenland. The future of the Thule Air Base is also relevant. This article reviews developments from the World War II to the present regarding international relations from a Greenlandic perspective. As a self-governing sub-national territory within the realm of Denmark, Greenland does not have the ultimate decision-making power within foreign and security policy. The new Self-Government Act of 2009, however, gives Greenland some room for manoeuvre in this respect.

Introduction

This article examines Greenland's role in international relations from the World War II to the present. The war is taken as a starting point based on the point that the Arctic was more or less a military vacuum prior it, but this changed during the war since military strategies penetrated the region. Basically, this had to do with the high north providing the shortest distance between three different continents (Asia, Europe and North America) and its role in the east-west conflict during that time (Østreng 1992). The evolution of nuclear and other military technologies was also a factor.

The story of Greenland in international relations will here be explored through the viewpoint of security, foreign policy, and climate change with the focus on the tensions between the different layers of decision-making, that is local, national, and international/global. During World War II and the cold war Greenland was considered as an outpost for the US military. Greenland was also of interest due to the cryolite mine in Ivittuut, since cryolite was needed in aluminium production for the aircraft industry. After the cold war, while the broader context changed and military tensions in the region generally waned, Greenland still appeared to be important in Danish-US relations under the umbrella of NATO. It was sought after by the US notably as a base for missile defence-related installations. More recently, Greenland's geostrategic position between North America, Europe and Asia has become more important with regard to natural resources in the Arctic. Climate change, claims for extended national jurisdictions related to the continental shelf, exploitation and exploration of natural resources in the form of oil, gas and minerals, and the protection of the indigenous Inuit population are all issues that continue to demand complex negotiations and relations between the Greenlandic and Danish authorities. In the preamble of the Act on Greenland Self-Government from 2009 it is stated that the inhabitants of Greenland are recognised as a people pursuant to international law with the right to self-determination (Greenland 2009). In one sense this implies that the Greenlandic people consider themselves as an indigenous population, and it also opens the way for claims about deciding their own future destiny.

As a sub-national territory within the realm of Denmark, Greenland lacks the ultimate decision-making power within foreign and security policy, even though it has full decision-making power regarding its own natural resources. The new act gives Greenland some room for manoeuvre also in international relations. The Act defines the collaboration regarding foreign affairs between Danish and Greenlandic authorities, and at the same time gives the Government of Greenland the right on behalf of the realm (Kingdom of Denmark) to negotiate and conclude agreements under international law with foreign states and international organisations in such matters as are of vital importance for Greenland (Greenland 2009: paragraph 12).

In this article we aim to shed some light on the complex relations between Greenland and Denmark on the one hand, and Greenland-Denmark-US on the other hand, while also considering the international/global context that Greenland faces. The clash over division of competences between the Greenlandic and Danish authorities

illuminates the complex situation existing between the two levels of decision-making powers, which overlap in the fields of security, foreign policy and climate change. All these issues are closely intertwined.

Theoretical framework

Foreign policy and security issues have been defined as involving the exercise of national military power against outside threats. According to this traditional view, the state has been the main subject in foreign policy and security. The international system is seen competition between hegemonic states, in which the balance of power is determined and controlled in the arena of international relations. This can be exemplified by the strategic situation and the dominant lines of policies pursued during World War II and the cold war. This concept of security also dominated in the circumpolar north through the 1970s and 1980s (Heininen 2010). During the late 1980s the concept of security started changing to encompass, and shift the focus towards, what can be called 'soft security' or non-military dimensions of security in which collaboration and diplomatic exchanges were in the forefront. New definitions of security included environmental matters and civil security challenges. Given the important roles played in such sectors by business and other non-state and trans-state entities, it is understood nowadays that states are not the only actors within foreign and security policy.

Another way to interpret security is through the approaches of the Copenhagen school to 'securitisation' (that is the identification of a given issue/phenomenon as a 'security' one) and to human security. The concept of 'securitisation' is a theoretical tool for the analysis of security policies. Within this approach individuals can be both 'securitising' actors and/or referent objects of security. This tool is helping us analyse and determine when there is/was a process of 'securitisation' and/or 'de-securitisation', how this came about and who the actors involved in the process were (Floyd 2007). The human security approach is seen rather as a way of defining and extending the policy agenda. Its most basic approach is to recognise the need, at individual level, both for freedom from fear and freedom from want. The human security approach explores different social and cultural contexts, through symbolic and social processes, and asks how security and insecurity are dealt with through social institutions. Human security encompasses a wide range of security dimensions such as economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security (Floyd 2007). These new approaches make it important, not merely to know and understand what defence and security is, but also to know the language and practice of human rights, environmental issues, problems of economic development, and the subtleties of comparative politics. 'Security is all of a piece' (Booth 1991). This is the point of departure for the present article. It is difficult to look at the Arctic and especially Greenland from just one angle, since it is at one and the same time a sub-set of international/global politics, an arena of Danish power politics, and a laboratory for climate change, which is presented as an opportunity, eventually, for Greenlandic statehood.

The Arctic and Greenland in particular has received much attention because of forecasts of a race for natural resources, which has opened up room for new forms of power politics in the north. The Arctic is often seen as a last resort in terms of available hydrocarbon resources (Koivurova 2011). The scope for power politics is directly linked to the issue of climate change, since the latter holds out the prospect of access to unconfirmed hydrocarbon assets on the seabed and under the ice.

Historical overview

As with other regions in the Arctic, Greenland has come under pressure from outside powers using the area to pursue their larger interests. The Arctic as such is a sparsely populated, resource-rich region whose location makes it increasingly important in geopolitical terms. Looking at history, it is obvious that some military planners have always seen the Arctic as a theatre of operations for weapons systems and as a potential arena for actual combat, while others have perceived the region as giving opportunities for collaboration in scientific research and presenting a growing need for co-operation to protect the shared ecosystems of the region (Young and Cherkasov 1992).

During the World War II when Denmark lost contact with Greenland due to the German occupation, the US showed interest in placing military bases around the island. The US opened a consulate in Nuuk and US coastguard vessels patrolled Greenlandic waters (Boel and Thuesen 1993). In 1941 the US signed a defence agreement with Greenland. This was made possible by the Danish ambassador in Washington D.C. at the time, Henrik Kauffmann. The treaty gave the US the right 'to construct, maintain and operate such landing fields, seaplane facilities and radio and meteorological installations as necessary' (Archer 2003). By the end of the war the US had established 13 army bases and 4 navy bases. Greenland was considered important for four main reasons: first, it was vital to prevent access to North America by any potential hostile power; second, Greenland was a key transit point to Europe; thirdly, Greenland provided crucial meteorological information; and fourthly, Greenland's mineral wealth was of value for the aircraft industry in the USA and Canada (Archer 2003).

In 1951, a new defence agreement was struck between Denmark and the US concerning Greenland. The Americans established the Thule Air Base in the northern part of Greenland and the base was considered of high military value (Boel and Thuesen 1993). The aims of the 1951 agreement were to stress the shared framework of NATO, of which Denmark was a member; to underline the

mutuality of interest between Denmark and the US regarding the defence of Greenland; to allow the United States a wide range of defence-related activities in Greenland; and at the same time to protect the local people (Archer 2003).

From 1958 to 1990 the US operated four radar stations over the Greenland ice sheet as part of the distant early warning system (DEW). Two long-range navigation (LORAN) stations were established on Greenland's east coast and these were connected to NATO's wider navigation system in the Arctic. During the cold war the ballistic missiles early warning system (BMEWS) at Thule provided the US with notice of a Soviet surprise attack. Other connections were placed in Alaska and England (Archer 2003). The USAF Space Command operated a military satellite of a telemetry station, Detachment 3, as well for gathering data from both civilian and US military satellites. During the cold war the Arctic was divided into two armed camps with the Soviet Union on the one hand and the United States on the other, together with four of its NATO allies - Canada, Denmark, Iceland and Norway (Young 2011). With the end of the cold war, strategic interest in Greenland declined and most of the military bases closed, but Thule Air Base is still running and it has even been upgraded to an advanced missile-defence standard. Permission for this development was formally granted in 2004 with the Igaliku agreement. This agreement was a supplement to the 1951 defence agreement and was signed also by the home-rule authorities of Greenland (Petersen 2011).

Since the late 1980s, the so-called Arctic eight (Canada, Russia, the United States, and the five Nordic states) have taken a lead in cooperative measures and international diplomacy regarding the Arctic region. The most prominent results of the international cooperation in the Arctic can be seen in the form of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, adopted in 1991 and the establishment of the Arctic Council (AC) in 1996 (Young 2011).

Denmark-Greenland relations

In 1995, the Danish forces in Greenland were brought together to become the Greenland Command (*Grønlands Kommando*), which like the Faroe Command is directly subordinate to the Danish defence command (Petersen 2011). This was one step towards the present Danish defence plan for a single Arctic command, which now have replaced the Greenland command (Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands 2011). The Arctic command was opened on 31 October 2012 by the Queen of Denmark in Nuuk, Greenland (*Sermitsiaq* (Nuuk) 31 October 2012, see also Jákupsstovu and Berg 2012). In the absence of a special coast guard, civil protection tasks at sea are handled by the Danish armed forces, with the exception of minor control functions performed by Greenland's self-government authorities (Petersen 2011). Denmark also operates the so-called GREENPOS reporting system, which controls all ships entering Greenland's territorial waters (Petersen 2011). In general terms, the purpose of the Danish defence in and around Greenland is primarily to enforce Danish sovereignty by virtue of presence and surveillance. At the same time, Danish forces perform search-and-rescue (SAR) missions; fisheries inspections; and other tasks in support of local society, such as ice surveillance and maritime environmental clean-up (Worm 2011).

In order to advance their foreign policy collaboration, the governments of Denmark and Greenland signed a joint declaration in Itilleq, Greenland in 2003. This document sought to define the involvement of Greenland's home-rule government in foreign and security policy matters of significance for the island (Loukacheva 2007). Another significant step was the signing of the act concerning the conclusion of agreements under international law by the government of Greenland (that is the Authorisation Act). This piece of Danish legislation introduced in 2005 gives the government of Greenland the right to 'negotiate and conclude agreements under international law with foreign states and international organizations, including administrative agreements, which relate entirely to subject matters where legislative and administrative powers have been transferred to the Authorities of Greenland' (Loukacheva 2007). This has been especially important within the fishing industry, in which Greenland has bilateral agreements with other states such as Iceland, Norway and Russia and with the EU.

In May 2008, Danish foreign minister Per Stig Møller gathered colleagues from the other four states bordering the Arctic Ocean for a conference in Ilulissat, Greenland, on the future governance of the Arctic (Petersen 2011). An official defence commission was set up in early 2008 with the implication that recent and future Arctic developments should be analysed and managed in joint agreement between the Danish and Greenlandic authorities. On the basis of the commission's report a defence plan was adopted by the Danish parliament for 2010–2014 (Petersen 2011; Worm 2011). The agreement recognises that higher energy prices will make exploration of oil and gas in the Arctic more attractive for business in future. The melting of the ice or the overall climate changes will also contribute to increased opportunities for shipping in the Arctic. The other coastal Arctic states have demonstrated the importance of the Arctic by maintaining a maritime presence. They also declared at the Ilulissat meeting their shared view that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the appropriate legal framework for maritime delimitation in the Arctic (Worm 2011). In this context, the Danish government has been cooperating together with the Greenlandic and Faroese authorities to prepare a submission to be filed at the Law of the Sea Tribunal, making an extended continental-shelf claim in accordance with article 76 of UNCLOS. Research and maritime surveys are being conducted in three areas around Greenland and in two areas around the Faroe Islands. A submission for the area north of the

Faroe Islands has been presented to the UN Commission on the Continental Shelf (CLCS), and submissions for the other areas are expected during the period 2011–14 (Worm 2011).

According to Denmark's recently updated strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020, to which the Faroe Islands as well as Greenland subscribe, the approach to security policy in the Arctic is based on an overall goal of preventing conflicts and avoiding militarisation of the Arctic. The three parts of the Danish realm, Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, will work for a peaceful, secure and safe Arctic with self-sustaining growth and development and with respect for the fragile environment and nature, in close cooperation with the network of international partners (Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands 2011).

Denmark-Greenland-US relations

As mentioned, it is the defence agreement from 1951 that sets out the relationship between Denmark (including Greenland) and the US. This agreement is still valid, but has been complemented with some further agreements. According to the Igaliku Agreement of 2004, Thule Air Base is the only defence area in Greenland in which the three parties' flags are flown. The three parties also note that the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (NATO SOFA) has applied in Greenland since 1955. The government of Greenland may appoint a representative with whom the U.S. commanding officer at Thule Air Base will consult on local affairs (Igaliku Agreement 2004: article 3).

Furthermore, some agreements have been made regarding environmental issues. All parties recognise the importance of protecting and improving the environment in Greenland. Preventive measures to combat pollution dangerous to human health and the flora and fauna will be considered. Protection of the natural environment and its habitats, and protection of the landscape and areas of historical and scientific value, are both emphasized (Igaliku Agreement 2004: article 3).

While circumpolar countries are calling for peaceful Arctic development in various forums, including the UN framework, there are certain military preparations and activities also going on in the Arctic for example in Alaska, Russia and Canada. They bring with them the danger of radioactive waste and other forms of military-related pollution that might affect the area and local livelihoods. This is, of course, of major concern for the Inuit traditional life related to hunting and fishing. In the case of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster the Saami people were considerably affected. In the aftermath of the catastrophe 73,000 reindeer were killed in Sweden alone as the meat was considered contaminated and not healthy for humans. The impact of a disaster of this kind can have considerable environmental, social and economic consequences and become devastating for the local people and their daily lives in sparse communities like those in the Arctic.

Recently, there have been debates over whose responsibility it is to clean up the former military waste areas where American bases have been stationed in Greenland. The Danish government and the Greenland government have agreed upon arrangements to clean up the sites around the Thule Air Base, called the Dundas. This decision was already made in 2009 (Denmark (Miljøministeriet) 2009), but the real action on this programme has been taking place during 2012–2013 (*Sermitsiaq* (Nuuk) 19 September 2012). The interesting aspect of the affair is that the US has denied its involvement, even though there has been a memorandum of understanding between the three parties since 1991 which clearly states that the US has full responsibility to remove hazardous substances generated by US military forces (Memorandum of Understanding 1991: article 6).

Other international relations

There is a dispute between Greenland, Denmark and Canada related to the island of Tartupaluk or Hans Island. An agreement between them was signed in 2005 regarding the utilisation of the island, opening possibilities for visiting and the conduct of scientific investigations on the island. The island is uninhabited but is thought to possess gold and other natural resources of importance. It may also be important in the future regarding shipping routes north of Canada to the Pacific Ocean (Greenland 2011). However, it is difficult to foresee future practical consequences of dividing Hans Island into a Canadian and Greenlandic part.

Another agreement has been struck regarding the borderline in the Davis Strait between Canada and Denmark/Greenland. This issue was settled in 1973, but has recently been re-confirmed (Laruelle 2011). The borderline reaches 3 000 km from the south of Greenland in the Davis Strait, through the Baffin Bay to the north to the Arctic Ocean.

Another dispute between Denmark/Greenland and Iceland regarding the Denmark Strait was resolved in 1997. Other disputes have been between Denmark/Greenland and Norway concerning the borderline at sea between Svalbard and northeast Greenland (settled in 2006) and Jan Mayen (settled in 1981). All these above mentioned disputes are all related to issues regarding Economic Exclusive Zones, continental shelves or delimitations regarding straits (Laruelle 2011).

Climate change and security

The impact of climate change on society has become more and more salient in the discussion over security issues in the Arctic. Climate change in the Arctic means melting ice, melting ice means easier accessibility of natural resources at sea and on land and more possibilities for cruise ship tourism and new shipping routes in Arctic waters. The Arctic is facing a radically different

economic, social and political future. With the increasing accessibility follow new claims about the right to raw material extraction and sovereignty in the Arctic. The problem is that the increased Arctic resource extraction and Arctic shipping will not only create new possibilities, but also new vulnerabilities and threats to a fragile security situation. Some argue that the new geo-political situation generated by climate change has 'given birth to a new scramble for territory and resources' (Borgerson 2008: 63), while others see a more balanced development with a tendency towards negotiation between stakeholders and an overall cooperative approach to solving Arctic security challenges (Hart and others 2012; Kraska 2011; Jørgensen and Rahbek-Clemmensen 2009; and Rahbek-Clemmensen and others 2012).

From a human security perspective the recent legally binding agreements on search and rescue (2011) and oil spill response (2013) between AC member states are promising. At a more conceptual level, the cooperative approach as such 'challenges the conventional wisdom of inevitable (military) confrontations' in the Arctic (Steinicke and Albrecht 2012: 7). It remains to be seen, however, whether the existing framework and capabilities for cooperation can actually cope with the significant increase of maritime traffic, and with other factors that could strain both the circumpolar nations' capacities and their consensus.

In political discourse, the term 'climate change' tends to mean global warming caused by human impact on nature with important environmental, economic, social and eventually political effects (UNFCCC 1994). Climate change, therefore, is a complex concept because of the different meanings with which it travels, and the many purposes with which it enters the political debate (Boykoff 2011). When addressing the discourse on climate change and security it is important to recognise that it is not just 'a problem waiting for a solution' (Hulme 2009: xxviii). It is no less than a question about believing 'different things about ourselves, the universe, and our place in the universe' (Hulme 2009: xxxvi).

If climate change generally means global warming, climate change in the Arctic means melting ice and the thawing of permafrost. The AC and its scientific working groups have mapped the situation and monitored the development in the Arctic very thoroughly for the last decade (ACIA 2005). The ramifications of climate change, global warming and melting ice in the Arctic are manifold. Among the implications of climate change the increased accessibility of natural resources is often mentioned and, consequently, rising possibilities for extractive industries in the form of either mining or drilling for oil and gas (AMAP 2011). Another significant implication is more possibilities for sailing in Arctic waters, with effects ranging from a growing frequency of shipping and extensions of the annual time period when sailing is possible, to access for larger vessels and possibilities for sailing further north and opening new shipping routes in the circumpolar region due to thinner ice or smaller ice-covered areas. Of immense interest is the possibility of opening shipping routes through the Arctic Ocean. The northwest passage and the northern sea route from Asia along the Russian coasts to Europe or NorthAmerica is considered to have global consequences for major trading powers in the world, and thus for overall global trade and geopolitics in general (Blunden 2012). Already, several ice-breakers and even ordinary reinforced-hull ships have proved the actual possibility of trans-Arctic shipping (Denmark, Greenland ans the Faroe Islands 2011). For China, as one of the major producers and traders in the world today, this prospect of transpolar shipping routes is one of the drivers behind the increased allocation of resources for Arctic research, encouraged by Chinese researchers themselves (Jakobson 2010; Jakobson and Peng 2012).

Forecasts differ on exactly when there will be an ice-free Arctic Ocean in the summer period and they have also changed over time, which in itself is a sign of the accelerating temperature increase. In the ACIA report, the estimation is 'by the end of the 21st century' (ACIA 2005: 999), while the estimation by others is 'within 10 to 20 years', 'within the next decade' or even 'perhaps as early as 2015' for a short period in summer (AMSA 2009: 4). But even in case of an 'ice-free Arctic', navigation may still be difficult because of drifting ice. At any rate, observations show that the sea ice at and around the North Pole reached a minimum in 2007, when it was only half the size it was in 1980, and a new minimum in 2012, 760.000 km^2 less than the 2007 minimum (NSIDC 2013).

These impacts of climate change will have tremendous consequences for security (Giddens 2009). To comprehend the scope of this, it is necessary to recall what was said above about the varying concepts of security and the continuing debate over them. As with democracy the concept of security 'means different things to different people' (Williams 2013: 1; for democracy see for example Dahl 1998: 3). Everyone 'is for it, but few people have a clear idea of what it means' (Paris 2001: 88). In this sense security may qualify as an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie 1956), although it should still be possible to find a common core in the different conceptions at hand. For our present purpose, we need not go further into such conceptual analysis, but will rather make use of the different conceptions to demonstrate the scope of the concept of security. Concretely, a multi-dimensional security approach based on Buzan and others (1998) will be used to explore further the security issues arising from Arctic climate change for Greenland and its region.

Buzan was one of the first to note, in a work written in 1983, that cold war definitions of security were heavily slanted towards the 'hard' military side (Buzan 2007 [1983]: 3). Together with the Copenhagen school of Wæver and others he argued for measuring security at the level of societies and individuals as well as states, and for recognising that the state and individual could also menace each other's security (Buzan 2007 [1983]:

18–35). In 1994, a UNDP report on human development extended the individual perspective by suggesting seven interlinked dimensions of 'human security' (UNDP 1994) a definition that has been the most widely cited and 'most authoritative' formulation (Paris 2001: 90). While the meaning of most terms used is self-evident, it is worth explaining that 'societal' security refers to society as such and its ability to uphold its functions during changing conditions, external or internal pressure or risks and threats of different kinds, political, economic, environmental and others (Buzan and others 1998). It is a concept worth bearing in mind for Greenland's case and for Arctic purposes generally as it is the official security doctrine of Sweden and Norway, and is largely applied under different names in Denmark and Finland too (Heininen 2012).

All levels, meaning environmental, economic, political, societal and social dimensions, of security are relevant for looking at the actual and potential security situation in Greenland. As a former deputy minister puts it, Greenland welcomes focus on environmental issues but does not welcome 'the notion that there shouldn't be any industrial development in the name of environmental protection' (Olsen 2013: 9). Few would envisage a military conflict as a realistic scenario for developments in the short run, but equally few would feel able to rule out all together the possibility in the future. Therefore, a challenge to address the 'mosaic of hard and soft law solutions' to make all ends meet certainly exists (Berkman and Vylegzhanin 2013: 393). Thus, a military presence is still seen as a necessary means, at least, for maintaining the basic (military) functions of the enforcement of sovereignty. However, in a vast and sparsely populated area like Greenland, Denmark's current military presence in the form of the Sirius dog sled patrol in the national park in the northeast corner of the country, or the few military vessels in the waters around Greenland, is seen more as a symbolic than a realistic military defence of the territory. On the other hand, the Danish military has many real societal and civil tasks in Greenland such as surveillance, search and rescue operations, fishery inspections, ice observation, transport etc. Military tools may thus be seen as not only covering traditional 'hard' purposes of national security but also contributing to human security, and providing intermediaries between national security and human security.

How have the Danish military forces, or rather the political parties (and the majority in the Danish parliament) that endorsed the Danish parliament's current agreement on defence policy reacted to the new challenges of security in the Arctic? It is precisely the prospect of climate change and its impact in the Arctic that has forced Danish political parties to acknowledge the increasing international importance of the Arctic region and the new challenges it brings. The new defence agreement mentions the Arctic in the context of the international tasks in which Danish military forces participate in view of UN and NATO obligations. The Arctic is seen as a region set to gain increasing international importance in years to come, which will change 'the region's geostrategic dynamic and significance' and present the Danish military with 'several challenges' (Denmark 2009: 2). In a section called a 'Special note on Greenland and the Arctic' these challenges are further analysed, and it is stated that the parties agree on the need to conduct 'a proper risk analysis of the maritime environment in and around Greenland', 'as a result of the expected increased amount of traffic and level of activity due to the impact of climate change (Denmark 2009: 12–13).

Even with increased Danish focus, it is clear that not all the challenges of physical security in and around Greenland can be met from purely national resources. Denmark as a nation, and the indigenous peoples' groups also participating in the AC, have therefore welcomed and promoted efforts to assure the pooling of assets and operation co-operational by Arctic states in face of major security incidents. These could include accidents to ships and offshore infrastructure and major natural disasters. Greenland takes an active part in the AC and according to the previous vision from the government of Greenland (2009–2013), it is clearly stated that Greenland will continue to be active in international cooperation and also work within the framework of the partnership agreements within the EU and the so called Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) in order to enhance the environmental issues concerning the new situation in the Arctic (Greenland 2012).

Environmental security and economic security, including the key aspects of employment, food supply and other essential goods, are intimately linked in Greenland as elsewhere in the changing Arctic. The challenge is to find ways of generating new wealth, either by direct Greenlandic action or by licensing exploitation by others and taking a share of the profits, without risking further serious degradation of the environment and thus also hastening climate change. A further complication in Greenland is that more autonomous revenue would bring closer the prospect of full independence, meaning that supporters of the latter are less likely to be cautious and restrictive on development. Some avenues being explored, such as drilling for possible oil and gas off Greenland's west coast have been relatively non-contentious in this context, but activities on land have clearer ecological, social and even political overtones. Recently, Greenland and South Korea signed an agreement on cooperation on mining issues, an issue that Greenland would consider as falling within the natural resource policy area. However, Møller, protested against this, maintaining that Greenland by this act of natural resource policy had actually made an act of foreign policy.

In another controversial case, Greenland is soon supposed to make a decision on an application for permission to mine rare earth elements (REE) in the mountain of Kuannersuit near the town of Narsaq in south Greenland. This would have had implications for Greenland's so-called 'zero tolerance' policy on uranium extraction,

since uranium will be a by-product of mining the REE. In October 2013, however, the ban on uranium was actually lifted by a narrow majority in the Greenlandic parliament. Again, Greenland would consider this as being within the Greenland's policy area of natural resources. However, as the Danish government maintains, as long as uranium is part of international agreements that enshrine Denmark's obligations towards the international community, it is not possible to draw a clear line of division between the Copenhagen-made security policy of the Danish realm and the Nuuk-made natural resource policy. Further, as Alcoa is planning to build an aluminium smelter in Maniitsoq, a whole series of other questions have been raised about using a Chinese labour force and the standards of environmental compliance. Another concern relates to the London Mining project with an iron mine, which will be situated 120 km in Isukasia northeast of Nuuk.

Concern about the societal impact of new projects brings us back to the human dimension. Both the collective statements of Arctic powers, at the Ilulissat meeting and in the AC, and Danish national policies have stressed the importance of protecting 'people's living and well-being' in the Arctic (Denmark., Greenland and the Faroe Islands 2011: 52). The former minister of foreign affairs of Canada put this in conceptual terms by saying that in political discourses on security it is fully legitimate to pay regard to civilians' security, not just states'. Human security is today a part of international security: 'The security of states is essential, but not sufficient, to fully ensure the safety and well-being of the world's peoples'. Therefore, any security concern must put 'people first' (Axworthy 2001: 20). Indeed, the slogan of the Canadian chairmanship of the AC which took over in May 2013 is development for 'people of the north'.

Working out what this means at a time of climate change and rapid development is, however, not straightforward even for a nation like Greenland that has a strong indigenous majority. It cannot be a matter of protecting traditional peoples' ways regardless of what they want themselves, since participation, ownership and a voice in policy making are also part of their human security needs and rights. In turn, the local communities themselves may vary in what they hope for or fear; new activities may help some and harm others in practical terms, or there can be alternatives of political outlook and belief. Added national wealth from new exploitation could in fact also be put to use to protect traditional activities and skills that have already become more resource-expensive, and to find new solutions for carrying them on under changed circumstances. Finally it is legitimate to ask how the human security of new groups coming legally into the area, to explore and research or to carry out productive tasks, will be defined and guaranteed. The interest of Greenland's case is precisely that it has a voice as a national community entirely living within the Arctic and that this voice is largely an indigenous one, unlike the far northern provinces of larger Arctic states which may have only a fraction of the national population and very little direct influence on perceptions and decisions of the central government. Greenland's answers to the challenge of balancing environmental, economic, and human security will be worth paying special attention to; and they will not necessarily follow the lines that most observers would expect.

Summary and way ahead

The new self-government act of 2009 gives Greenland full responsibility regarding its own natural resources. Defence, foreign policy and sovereignty control remains, however, in Danish hands (Petersen 2011). This situation can lead to different interpretations and different policy agendas regarding Greenland. On the one hand, Denmark is still sovereign, but Greenland can make decisions on its own. The problem is that foreign policy and security are closely linked to questions about natural resources. There is a need for collaboration between the two governments in overlapping matters such as these, a process that can also be channelled through the Greenlandic/Danish delegation of officials responsible for foreign policy and security policy. The question is, of course, whether this forum is adequate or whether another arrangement may be necessary.

This particular case may be a question that can be settled by consultations between the two governments, but in the end it might be the very construction of the self-government act that is the problem. The law operates with a mechanism of piecemeal independence, since policy areas can be taken over by Greenland one by one if Greenland decides to do so, aside from the areas of foreign, defence and security policy which remain the prerogative of Denmark (after consultation with the government of Greenland in cases of Greenlandic interests). In this way it is presupposed that all policy areas are separable from each other. The recent instances of agreements with foreign governments on mining and the future perspective of Greenland as uranium producer show clearly that natural resource policy on the one hand and policies on foreign relations, defence issues and security questions on the other are in fact not separable. Thus, the very construction of the act is not without its contradictions.

In the election of 12 March 2013, the Social Democratic Party, Siumut, achieved an overwhelming victory. The new coalition in government constituted Siumut, the conservative party Atassut and the new nationalistic party of Partii Inuit. However, in connection with the vote on lifting the ban on uranium the Partii Inuit left the government coalition. In the government coalition agreement it is stated that Greenland will continue to work for an enhanced competence within foreign relations. There will also be an emphasis on investigating the possibilities for better utilisation of the OCT order within the EU. Another feature is to take the first step towards taking control over the legislation over foreign labour,

which now lies with Denmark. Regarding the policy of extractive industries, the government of Greenland wants to reevaluate the legislation within large scale industries. All agreements that are in progress will be realised, but for new investors royalties will be included. The Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum will be changed into a Department of Natural Resources. The security issues will be handled in cooperation with established partners (Greenland 2013).

Greenland is heading towards independence. How a Greenlandic sovereign state will handle the foreign and security policy in the future is a hard question to answer. Only time will tell, if Greenland will enter into new negotiations with its former 'shelter' country of the US or if Greenland will look to the east with cooperation in a nordic context with Denmark in the forefront. Greenland lacks its own military forces, so one form of shelter or the other would be necessary in the new era of Arctic relations.

References

ACIA (Arctic Climate Impact Assessment). 2005. *Arctic climate impact assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

AMAP (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme). 2011. *Snow, water, ice and permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA): climate change and the cryosphere*. Oslo: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme.

AMSA (Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment). 2009. *Arctic marine shipping assessment 2009 report*. URL: http://www.pame.is/index.php/amsa–2009–report (accessed 31 March 2013).

Archer, C. 2003. Greenland, US bases and missile defence: new two–level negotiations? *Cooperation and Conflict* 38 (2): 125–147.

Axworthy, L. 2001. Human security and global governance: putting people first. *Global Governance* 7 (1): 19–23.

Berkman, P.A. and A.N. Vylegzhanin. 2013. Conclusions: building common interests in the Arctic Ocean. In: Berkman, P.A. and A.N. Vylegzhanin (editors). *Environmental security in the Arctic Ocean*. Dordrecht: Springer (NATO Science for Peace and Security Series C: Environmental Security): 371–404.

Blunden, M. 2012. Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route. *International Affairs* 88 (1): 116–129.

Boel, J. and S.T. Thuesen. 1993. Greenland in the world: the impact of World War II on Danish–Greenlandic relations. In: *Cultural and Social Research in Greenland: selected essays 1992–2010*. Nuuk: Ilisimatusarfik/Atuagkat: 9–35.

Borgerson, S.G. 2008. Arctic meltdown: the economic and security implications of global warming. *Foreign Affairs* 87 (2): 63–77.

Booth, K. 1991. Security and emancipation. *Review of International Studies* 17 (4): 313–326.

Boykoff, M.T. 2011. *Who speaks for the climate? Making sense of media reporting on climate change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buzan, B. 2007 [1983]. *People, states and fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post–cold war era*. Colchester: ECPR Press (ECPR Press Classics).

Buzan, B., O. Wæver, and J. de Wilde. 1998. *Security: a new framework for analysis*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Dahl, R.A. 1998. *On democracy*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Denmark. 2009. *Danish defence agreement 2010–2014*. URL: http://www.fmn.dk/nyheder/Documents/danish–defence–agreement–2010–2014–english.pdf (accessed 31 March 2013).

Denmark (Miljøministeriet) [Ministry of Environment]. 2009. *Ny indsats mod forurening i Grønland* [*New actions against pollution in Greenland*]. URL: http://mim.dk/Nyheder/2009 (accessed 22 September 2012).

Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. 2011. *Kingdom of Denmark strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020*. Copenhagen: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Nuuk: Government of Greenland, Department of Foreign Affairs; Tórshavn: Government of the Faroes, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Floyd, R. 2007. Human security and the Copenhagen School's securitization approach: conceptualizing human security as a securitization move. *Human Security Journal* 5: 38–49.

Gallie, W.B. 1956. Essentially contested concepts. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56: 167–198.

Giddens, A. 2009. *The politics of climate change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Greenland. 2009. Act on Greenland Self–Government (Act 473, 12 June 2009). URL: http://naalakkersuisut.gl/~/media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Engelske–tekster/Act%20on%20Greenland.pdf (accessed 11 October 2012).

Greenland. 2011. Udenrigspolitisk strategi og redegørelse 2011 [Foreign policy strategy and report]. Nuuk: Naalakkersuisut – Governmment of Greenland.

Greenland. 2012. *Vores fremtid – dit og mit ansvar – på vej mod 2025* [Our future – your and my responsibility – on the road to 2025]. Nuuk: Naalakkersuisut – Governmment of Greenland.

Greenland. 2013. *Koalitionsaftale 2013–2017: Et samlet land – et samlet folk* [Coalition agreement 2013–2017: A united country – a united people]. Nuuk: Naalakkersuisut – Governmment of Greenland.

Hart, A., J. Bruce and D. Steven. 2012. Chill out: why cooperation is balancing conflict among major powers in the new Arctic. *Managing Global Order*, May , 2012

Heininen, L. 2010. Globalization and security in the circumpolar north. In: Heininen, L. and C. Southcott (editors.). *Globalization and the circumpolar north*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press: 221–264.

Heininen, L. 2012. State of the Arctic strategies and policies: a summary. In: Heininen, L. (editor). *Arctic Yearbook 2012*. (Akureyri: Northern Research Forum): 2–45.

Hulme, M. 2009. *Why we disagree on climate change: understanding controversy, inaction and opportunity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Igaliku Agreement, 6 August 2004. Bekendtgørelse af aftale af 6. august 2004 med Amerikas Forenede Stater om ændring og supplering af overenskomst af 27. april 1951 om forsvaret af Grønland [Announcement of agreement of 6 August 2004 with the United States of America about changes and supplements of agreement of 27 April 1951 about the defence of Greenland]. URL: https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=23078&exp=1 (accessed 11 October 2012).

Jakobson, L. 2010. *China prepares for an ice–free Arctic*. Stockholm: SIPRI (SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security, 2010/2).

Jakobson, L. and J. Peng. 2012. *China's Arctic aspirations*. Stockholm: SIPRI (SIPRI Policy Paper, 34).

Jákupsstovu, B. and R. Berg. 2012. The Faroe Islands' security policy in a process of devolution. *Stjórnmál and Stjórnsýsla* 2 (2): 413–430.

Jørgensen, H.J and J. Rahbek–Clemmensen. 2009. *Keep It cool! Four scenarios for the Danish armed forces in Greenland in 2030*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for Military Studies.

Koivurova, T. 2011. Scramble for resources or orderly development: what is happening in the Arctic? In: Salmela, L. (editor) *Nordic cooperation and the far north*. Helsinki: National Defence University, Department of Strategic and Defence Studies, Series 2: Research Report No 46: 1–14.

Kraska, J. 2011. The new Arctic geography and U.S. strategy. In: Kraska, J. (editor). *Arctic security in an age of climate change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 244–266.

Laruelle, M. 2011. International law and geographical representations: the Russian stance on territorial conflicts in the Arctic. In: Salmela, L. (editor). *Nordic cooperation and the far north*. Helsinki: National Defence University, Department of Strategic and Defence Studies, Series 2: Research Report No 46: 15–36.

Loukacheva, N. 2007. *The Arctic promise: legal and political autonomy of Greenland and Nunavut*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Memorandum of understanding between the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark (including the Home Rule of Greenland) and the Government of the United States of America concerning use of Sondrestrom aviation facility, Kulusuk airfield and other matters related to United States military activities in Greenland. 1991 (13 March 1991). United Nations Treaty Series No. 28453.

NSIDC (National Snow and Ice Data Center). 2013. NSIDC Sea ice index 2013. Boulder CO: National Snow and Ice Data Center. URL: http://nsidc.org/data/seaice_index/ (accessed 22 March 2013).

Olsen, I.H. 2013. Opening remarks. In: Berkman, P.A. and A.N. Vylegzhanin (editors). *Environmental security in the Arctic Ocean*. Dordrecht: Springer (NATO Science for Peace and Security Series C: Environmental Security): 7–10.

Østreng, W. 1992. Political–military relations among the ice states: the conceptual basis of state behaviour. In: Griffiths, F. (editor) *Arctic alternatives: civility or militarism in the circumpolar*

Paris, R. 2001. Human security: paradigm shift or hot air? *International Security* 26 (2): 87–102.

Petersen, N. 2011. The Arctic challenge to Danish foreign and security policy. In: Kraska, J. (editor). *Arctic security in an age of climate change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 145–165.

Rahbek–Clemmensen, J., E.S. Larsen and M.V. Rasmussen. 2012. *Forsvaret i Arktis: suverænitet, samarbejde og sikkerhed* [The defence in the Arctic: sovereignty, cooperation and security]. Copenhagen: Centre for Military Studies.

Steinicke, S. and S. Albrecht. 2012. *Search and rescue in the Arctic*. Berlin: SWP (Working Paper SG 2).

UNDP. 1994. *Human development report 1994*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

UNFCCC. 1994. *United Nations: framework convention on climate change* URL: http://unfccc.int/essential _background/ convention/background/items/1349.php (accessed 31 March 2013).

Williams, P.D. 2013. *Security studies: an introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Worm, A. 2011. Arctic security: a Greenlandic perspective. In: Kraska, J. (editor). *Arctic security in an age of climate change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 166–173.

Young, O.R. 2011. Arctic futures: the politics of transformation. In: Kraska, J. (editor). *Arctic security in an age of climate change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: xxi–xxvii.

Young, O.R. and A.I. Cherkasov. 1992. International co–operation in the Arctic: opportunities and constraints. In: Griffiths, F. (editor). *Arctic alternatives: civility or militarism in the circumpolar north*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.