“Iceland and the Arctic: The Politics of Territoriality“

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Drivers of Icelandic Arctic Policies

- Geostrategic Position
- Economic Interests
- Marine Resources
- Environmental Concerns
- Political, Military, and Security Factors
- Sovereignty and Territoriality
- Regional Governance and Cooperation
- International Legal Norms
Domestic Political Context

- Political Consensus on Prioritizing the Arctic
- Economic Benefits: Fish, Tourism, Oil, Infrastructure
- Military and Security Contingencies: “Hard” and “Soft”
- Environmental Risks: Oil Spills
- Regional Cooperation: Commerce, Search and Rescue, Environmental Cooperation, Scientific Research, Infrastructure Projects, Tourism
- New Sea Routes: Economic Opportunities versus Environmental Hazards
Icelandic Position on Arctic Governance

- The Role of the Arctic Council: The Main Arctic Venue
- The Status of the Eight Arctic States: Equal Stakeholders
- The Arctic Five Meetings: Vocal Resistance and Opposition
- UN Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS): The Recognized Legal Regime for the Arctic
Arctic Regionalization and Internationalization

ICELANDIC POSITION ON:

- Applicability of IMO Rules and Regulations
- Proposals on International Treaty (Antarctica Precedent); Moratoriums on Resource Exploitation, and Arctic Demilitarization
- Multilateral Search and Rescue Cooperation
- Regional Cooperation against Oil Pollution
New Policy Accents

- Defining Iceland as an Arctic Coastal State
- A Broader Political and Geographic Interpretation of the Arctic
- Support for Arctic Peoples Rights
- Special Cooperation with Greenland
- Iceland as an International Search and Rescue Center
- Iceland as a “Telecommunications Hub” in the North (Submarine Communications Cables from the United States and Russia to Iceland)
Policies Toward Individual Arctic States

- United States
- Russia
- Canada
- Norway
- Denmark/Greenland
- Finland
- Sweden
Iceland’s Position with Respect to “External” Actors in the Arctic

- NATO
- European Union
- Permanent Observer Status in the Arctic Council
- Potential European and Asian Stakeholders and Individual States: China, Japan, South Korea, Italy, etc.
Iceland’s Legal Positions

- The Role of UNCLOS in Deciding on Arctic Jurisdictional Claims
- Territorial Claims of the Littoral Arctic States in the Arctic Ocean
- Recognition of Iceland as an Arctic Coastal State
- Interpretation of Norway’s Sovereign Rights over Svalbard/Spitsbergen
Potential Conflict Scenarios: Implications for Iceland

- Russia versus/and Canada and Denmark over the Lomonosov Ridge
- The Norwegian “Fishery Protection Zone” around Svalbard
- Canada and Denmark: Dispute over the Ownership of Hans Island
- Canada-U.S. Dispute over Areas in the Beaufort Sea
- Canada’s Sovereign Claim to the Northwestern Passage
- Russia’s Control over the Northern Sea Route
Policy Challenges

- Iceland’s Demand for a Coastal State Status has not been recognized by the Arctic Five
- The Arctic Five have expanded their Cooperation on Arctic Issues
- Tromsø chosen over Reykjavík for the Permanent Arctic Council Secretariat
- The Idea for an International Search and Rescue Center has not gathered explicit Support
- Limited Resources for “Arctic Investment”
Human and Environmental Security Factors

- Impact of Climate Change on the Marine Ecosystem around Iceland and on its Economy
- Uncertainty about the Future Distribution of Fish Stocks
- Efforts to Minimize the Risk of Oil Pollution
- Potential Threat of Nuclear Accidents
- Preventing Shipping Mishaps in connection with Arctic Tourism
Economic Interests, Energy Deposits, Mineral Resources

- The Dragon Zone: Oil Extraction Potential in the EEZ
- Assessment of Oil Accessibility
- Fish Stocks Sustainability and Access to Arctic Fishing
- Transshipment Harbor Potential
Arctic Security: Icelandic Context and Historical Factors

- U.S.-Icelandic Defense Agreement of 1951 in Force, if no U.S. Troops Stationed in Iceland since 2006
- Iceland’s NATO Membership as a Non-Military Country
- The Potential Renewal of Iceland’s Military Importance as a Result of Arctic Geopolitics
Icelandic “Post-American” Security Policy

- NATO Air Policing in Iceland since 2007
- Recycled Cold War Military Narratives: Russian Bombers Flights Near Iceland
- Post-2006 Regional Security Cooperation Agreements with Norway, Denmark, Canada and Britain
- Iceland’s EU Membership Application
- Iceland’s Search for a Post-American Foreign Policy Identity
Iceland’s Arctic Identity Constructions

- Territorial Nationalism and “Banal Nationalism” (Michael Billig)
- Historical Trajectories: Western National Identity Configurations versus “Third World” Influences
- Historical Mythologies and Arctic Exploration: The Contemporary Repackaging of Vilhjálmur Stefánsson’s Early 20th Century “Arctic Mediterranean” Vision
“An Imagined Icelandic Arctic Community”

- Imaginative Geographies and Icelandic Foreign Policy
- The “Performativity of Borders” (Mark Salter) and Re-Iterations and Ritualizations of Icelandic Coastal State Credentials
- Iceland’s Identity Projection as a North Atlantic and Arctic State
- The Influence of Norway’s High North Strategy
Conclusion

- Prioritization of the Arctic in Icelandic Foreign Policy
- The Arctic Council and the Arctic Eight as the Main Legitimate Stakeholders
- Stiff Opposition against the Arctic Five Venue
- A Tension in Icelandic Policy between Potential Economic Rewards and Environmental Risks with respect to the Opening of the Arctic and to new Sea Routes