

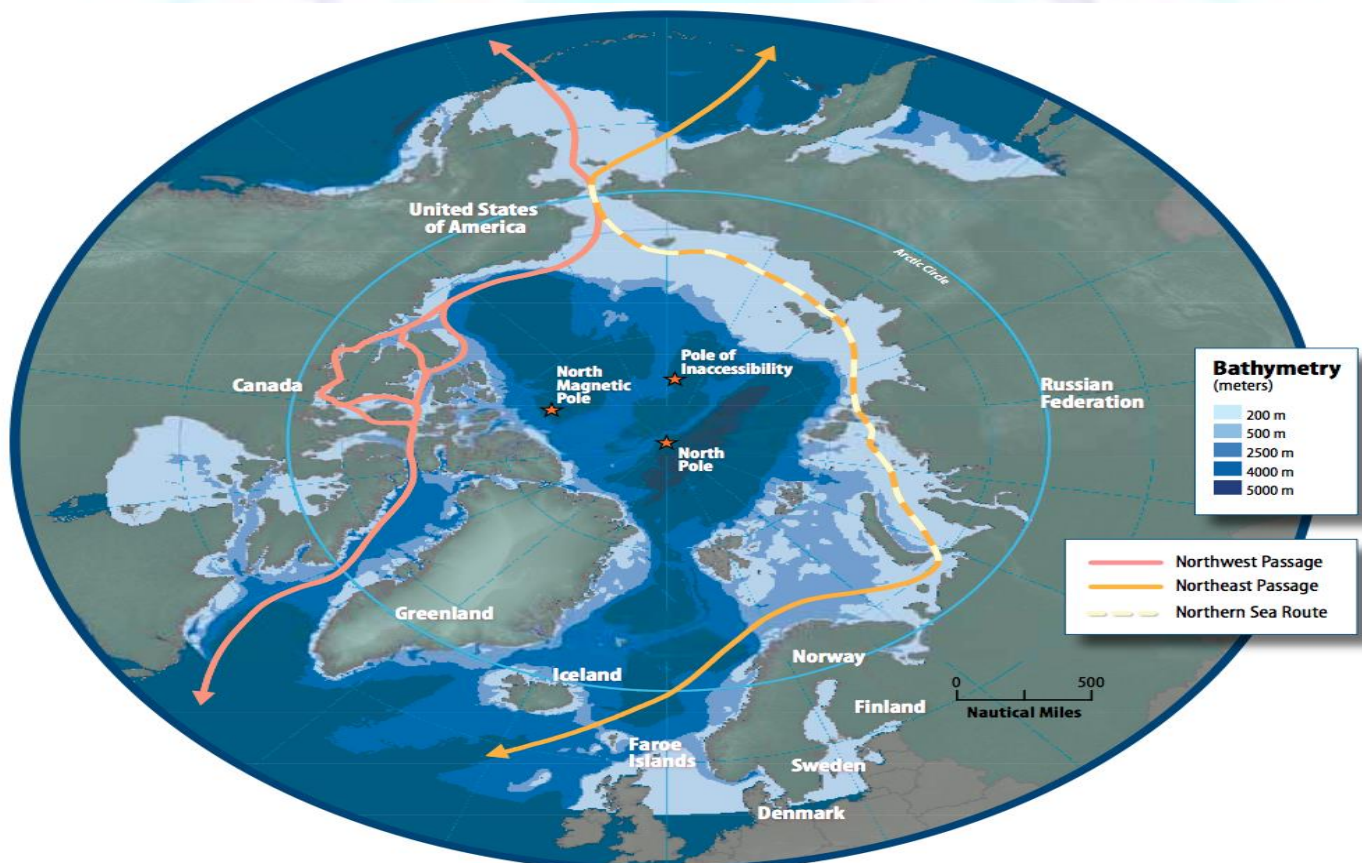
1. From Venezuela to Greenland – International Relation

The recent remarks by the US President asserting that the United States “needs Greenland for national security” have triggered a diplomatic standoff with Denmark and Greenland, raising concerns over sovereignty, Arctic geopolitics, and great-power competition. Greenland is a semi-autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, exercising self-rule over domestic affairs such as education, health, and natural resources, while Denmark retains authority over defence and foreign policy.

It maintains strong defence linkages with NATO, primarily through Denmark’s membership and longstanding US military presence. Geographically, Greenland is located between the Arctic Ocean and the North Atlantic Ocean, northeast of Canada, placing it astride key transatlantic and polar corridors. It is the world’s largest island, and more than 80% of its landmass is covered by the Greenland Ice Sheet, making it central to global climate systems and sea-level dynamics. The population is sparse (largely Inuit), but the territory’s geostrategic value far outweighs its demographic size.

Strategic Significance of Greenland

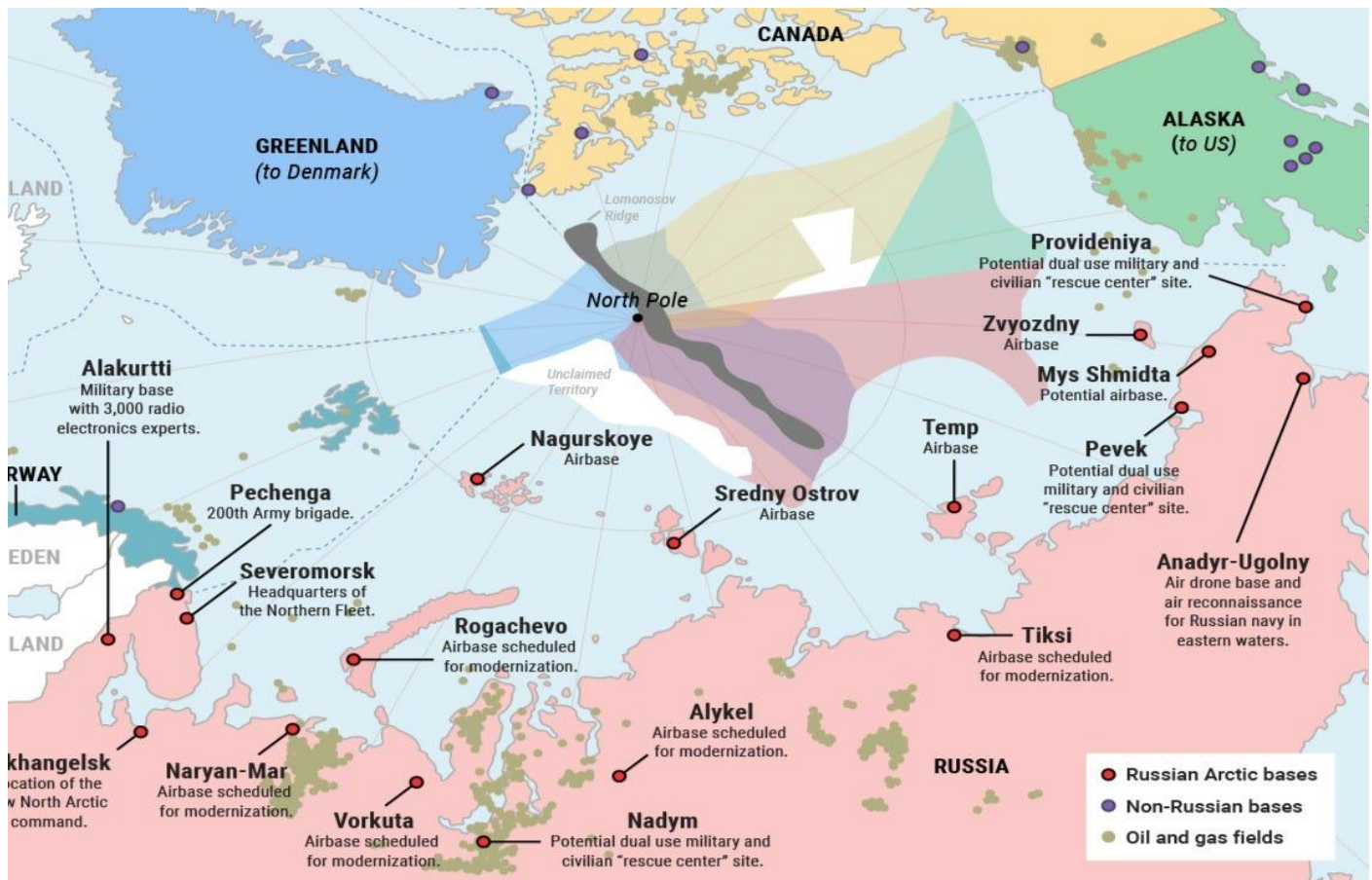
Military and Security Importance



Greenland’s position between North America and Europe makes it a cornerstone of NATO’s Arctic and transatlantic defence architecture. It hosts the Pituffik Space Base (formerly Thule Air Base), a critical node in ballistic missile early-warning and space surveillance systems. The base enhances detection of polar missile trajectories, particularly those originating from Russia and potentially China, strengthening North American and allied deterrence.

Space and Satellite Tracking Role

Greenland’s high-latitude location is ideal for ground stations tracking polar-orbiting satellites, which pass over the pole’s multiple times a day. These satellites are vital for intelligence gathering, GPS navigation, climate monitoring, weather forecasting, and secure military communications. Control over



such infrastructure confers strategic advantages in space situational awareness, an increasingly contested domain.

Critical Minerals and Resource Potential

Greenland possesses significant reserves of rare earth elements (REEs), uranium, graphite, zinc, and other strategic minerals. These resources are crucial for renewable energy technologies, electric vehicles, advanced electronics, and defence manufacturing. Exploitation of Greenland's minerals could reduce Western dependence on highly concentrated supply chains, particularly those dominated by China.

Emerging Arctic Shipping Routes

Accelerated Arctic ice melt is opening new maritime corridors, including the Transpolar Sea Route. Greenland is positioned near these future sea lanes, which could shorten travel times between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans compared to traditional routes.

Bypassing Global Chokepoints – Arctic routes offer alternatives to congested and vulnerable chokepoints such as the Panama Canal and the Suez Canal. This enhances global trade resilience, naval flexibility, and strategic redundancy in times of crisis.

Geopolitical Competition in the Arctic

Growing strategic interest from the US, China, and Russia has elevated Greenland's role in great-power rivalry. China views Greenland through the lens of its "Polar Silk Road," while Russia militarises the Arctic to secure its northern flank. Greenland thus emerges as a strategic hinge in Arctic geopolitics.

Historical Trajectory of US–Greenland Engagement

During World War II, the US occupied Greenland (then a Danish colony) to prevent Nazi Germany from gaining a foothold after Denmark fell to Germany. In 1946, the US offered \$100 million to Denmark to purchase Greenland, reflecting early Cold War strategic calculations. The 1951 US–Denmark Defence Agreement formalised long-term American military access, institutionalising the US presence.

Throughout the Cold War, Greenland functioned as a frontline outpost in US missile defence and early-warning networks. During his first term, President Donald Trump revived the proposal to purchase Greenland, framing it as a strategic and economic acquisition—an idea firmly rejected by Denmark.

The Alleged “Three-Phase Strategy”– Danish assessments have suggested a multi-layered influence approach, consistent with modern hybrid warfare and grey-zone tactics.

Soft power engagement – High-profile US visits, cultural outreach, and symbolic gestures aimed at Greenlandic society.

Diplomatic coercion – Public criticism of Denmark’s governance and insinuations that Greenland could fare better under alternative arrangements.

Political influence operations – Alleged efforts to encourage or amplify separatist sentiments within Greenland, testing the cohesion of the Danish realm.

US Bought Territories in the Past

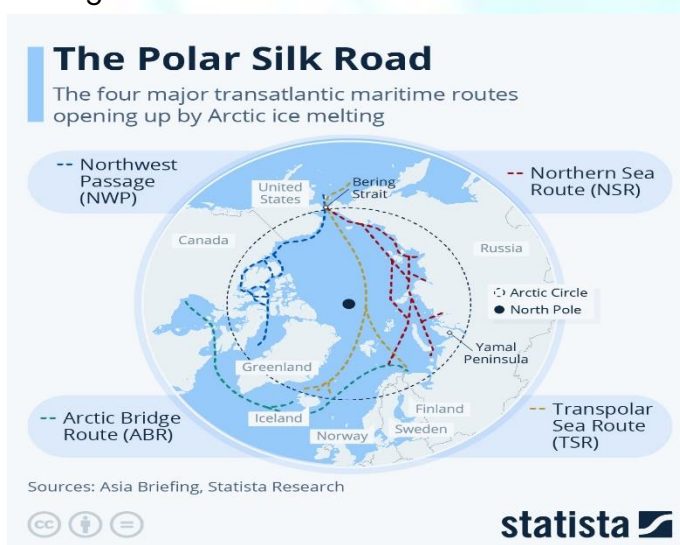
Louisiana Purchase (1803)– Over 2 million sq km acquired from France for \$15 million, doubling US territory.

Alaska Purchase (1867)– 1.5 million sq km bought from Russia for \$7.2 million, later proving rich in resources.

Danish West Indies (1917)– Purchased from Denmark, now the US Virgin Islands. These acquisitions occurred under very different international legal norms, predating the modern sovereignty-based order and the UN system. In today’s context, territorial purchase clashes with contemporary principles of self-determination and sovereign equality.

Arctic as the Next Theatre of Great-Power Competition

The Greenland debate reflects accelerating militarisation of the Arctic, driven by climate change and strategic competition. It raises concerns about erosion of sovereignty norms and pressure on smaller states and autonomous territories. Institutions such as the Arctic Council face stress as consensus-based governance collides with geopolitical polarisation. The situation illustrates a broader trend of re-territorialisation of global politics, where geography and physical space regain primacy in strategic calculations.



Way Ahead

Strengthen multilateral Arctic governance to manage security competition and environmental risks. Uphold sovereignty, self-determination, and consent-based cooperation in all Arctic engagements. The US and its allies must balance security imperatives with alliance credibility, particularly vis-à-vis Denmark and Greenlandic autonomy. Promote confidence-building measures, transparency in military activities, and dialogue to prevent miscalculation. Ensure that Arctic development aligns with

sustainability, indigenous rights, and long-term regional stability.

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