

A b s t r a c t s

Herfried Münkler

Sea powers and land powers

Concepts for a history of maritime ideas and strategies

In the view of Thucydides, the war between Athens and Sparta was caused by the difference between the land and the sea. Sea powers and land powers differ in terms of their economic and social basis and with regard to their political order. They also pursue different military and strategic goals. The Peloponnesian War is the template for a hegemonial conflict between the open trading city and the closed barracks, between democracy and oligarchy, between sea and land. This conflict pattern has dominated the history of international relations right up until today. Even current hotspots such as the annexation of Ukrainian Crimea by Russia, the escalating conflict between the USA and China and an apparently economic macroproject such as China's "One Belt, One Road Initiative" can be explained by way of strategic categories.

Kristina Küntzel-Witt

An ice-free crossing via the North Pole?

The search for the north-east passage in the 18th century

For many years, Russia showed no interest in the possibility of creating a shipping route along the coast to Asia. It was only under Peter I that exploration began of the Siberian coast of the Arctic Ocean. The issue of a northern sea route began to be discussed, and the theory was developed that an ice-free passage across the Arctic was possible. This was based on the assumption that sea water cannot freeze, since the saline content is too high. The polymath Mikhail Lomonosov also promoted this hypothesis. In 1765/1766, he initiated Vasily Chichagov's first expedition to the North Pole. When this attempt failed, the Russian Empire abandoned the prospect of developing a passage via the North Pole. However, this idea experienced a renaissance in western Europe during the 19th century.

Andreas Renner
Market, State and Propaganda
The Northern Sea Route in Russia's Arctic plans

As a result of climate change, the Northern Sea Route could become a profitable link between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Russia, which already began plans to develop the Arctic region during tsarist times, anticipates an increase in transit traffic and goods exports. The expansion of the infrastructure for the use of the sea route and for extracting raw materials is a key project in Russia's Arctic strategy. At the same time, the Arctic Ocean acts as a projection screen for Moscow's claims to power in partnership with China.

Arild Moe
Russia's Northern Sea Route
Shipping Russian hydrocarbons in the Arctic Ocean

Russia has been trying to create a regular shipping route in the Arctic Ocean for over a hundred years, in the hope that this will help open up the far north. During the Soviet era, the focus was on domestic shipping, until the project was abandoned due to the vast expense involved. It then was restarted in the mid-2000s, with the aim of expanding the Northern Sea Route to create a workable international trade route. However, maritime traffic has remained problematic, despite dramatic changes in the climate that have led the sea ice to melt during the summer months. Only a small section - the Kara Sea - in the west of the region has been successfully developed into an export route for natural gas and crude oil. This project has been characterised by competition between the state-owned company *Rosatom* and the state supervisory authorities over control of the essential fleet of nuclear-powered icebreakers, as well as over investments in infrastructure; *Rosatom* has prevailed.

Andrei Zagorsky
Creating an Arctic battlefield
Critique of securitized reason

For years, observers have been warning of wars over sovereignty rights and resources in the Arctic as a result of climate change. This fear is exaggerated. There are currently no territorial conflicts, nor is there a battle over resources. The geographical and climatic conditions also make war in the Arctic an unlikely prospect. However, the competition between the USA, China and Russia on the global political stage could also spill over into the Arctic. The alienation between Russia and the West is making it impossible to establish a common security architecture for all Arctic states. The USA and Russia are increasingly including the interface between the western Arctic Ocean and the northern Atlantic in their deterrence plans. And if Russia were to prevent ships from sailing through its coastal waters in the northern sea passage region and the USA were to insist on its right to passage, a situation similar to that in the South China Sea could arise in the Arctic Ocean.

Christoph Humrich
Climate change and competition between the major powers
Challenges to regional cooperation in the Arctic

In the Arctic, global climate change has already had a fundamental impact on people and the environment. The extraction of raw materials and shipping are becoming easier. The political consequences of these developments are the subject of heated debate. Some observers predict an escalation of inter-state conflicts. Others regard the Arctic as being an exceptional region in which shared interests and a spirit of cooperation prevent confrontation. To date, the eight states on the Arctic Council have consistently favoured cooperation. However, in 2019, the USA did a U-turn, declared the Arctic an arena for competition between the major powers and announced that it will increase its military involvement in the region. As a result, the potential for conflict has risen. Now more than ever, it is important that forms of regional cooperation are upheld. The change of course by the USA also demonstrates the high level of influence of global political developments on the Arctic, however.

Michael Paul
Maritime triangle
China's rise, Russia's decline and the USA

China has taken over from Russia as the leading major maritime power behind the USA. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow has been unable to modernise and expand its deep-sea fleet. Even so, Russia still has respectable abilities to preserve its national security interests. And even in its relatively poor condition, the Russian navy is a model for China, which is increasingly projecting its global power and which in the foreseeable future will be in a position to challenge the USA on the world's seas. Now, the development of maritime security and trust are needed. Yet there is far less willingness now to take preventive steps towards limiting the risk to security through armament control.

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Rebecca Hahn
Belief and belonging
First-person narration of a young Russian German Woman

Among the Russian Germans who have arrived in Germany since the 1990s, there are also Mennonites. They have an intense common life. Religion and a strong sense of community are at the same time resources and restrictions for integration. For members of the second generation, the values and expectations of the community can become a source of tension when they collide with worldly norms and ideals. In each case, the issue is identity and belonging to a group.