

Between Security and Sovereignty:  
Denmark's Arctic Conundrum Amidst Trump's New Cold War

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## Abstract

This thesis analyses the development of Danish foreign and security policy towards the Arctic ever since the end of the Second World War up until today. It draws primarily on Denmark's relation to the United States, having been Denmark's main ally for the last 75 years on all security related matters - but especially since the end of the Cold War. Both Denmark and the US are considered Arctic coastal states, with Denmark accessing the Arctic ocean through its sovereign claim over Greenland, and the US through the state of Alaska. The thesis supports other scholarly studies that argue that a 'new Cold War' has been taking place in the years following the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States in 2016 between the US, China and Russia, with potentially grave ramifications for Arctic regional security, given its growing importance as a region for resource extraction and commercial passage through the Northern Sea Route. For Denmark, this new Cold War threatens its sovereign claim over Greenland – a crucial geostrategic location for a potential Arctic militarization - being challenged as a small nation by the great power competitions accelerating in the Arctic.

The thesis divides the last 75 years into three categorized eras: 1) The Cold War (1945-1991); 2) The post-Cold War era (1991-2017); 3) The 'new Cold War' as a developing era (2017 - ; denoted in the thesis), and analyses for each era the fundamentals of Denmark – US relations, first providing a more general overview of their political relations as security partners on non-Arctic related matters, in order to then draw parallels to the development of Denmark – US relations in the Arctic and their roles as state actors in shaping the geopolitical climate of the region. As I show, a lot can be learned from the Cold War to understand what is and may happen in the Arctic in the new Cold War.

The thesis makes use of foreign policy analysis, as well as two variations of discourse analysis – poststructuralist discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis – as tools to engage with the empirical data available and answer the thesis's main research questions: what is the perceived effect of the Trump administration's policy to the position of Denmark in the Arctic? The question is answered on the basis of two main theoretical frameworks: Securitization Theory and Region-Building Theory. These frameworks build the necessary foundation which along with the mentioned methodologies can provide a holistic overview and perspective on the matter with scientific validity.

The thesis ends by discussing what can be expected in the near future, based on the knowledge acquired and the answers provided to the research question. A new administration led by president elect Joe Biden took over the White House on January 20st, and with it many new questions are yet to be answered, regarding the future of Denmark – US relations, the future of Arctic governance and the course of the new Cold War. I ponder on what options Denmark might have that could guarantee its security while also maintaining its sovereignty over Greenland – one option being a potential turn towards the EU as its new main security partner. Yet doing so would mean breaking a long-lasting relationship with the US while standing up to the world's biggest economic and military superpower.

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*However, now, we fear the Cold War is returning. We fear this because we are only 57,000 souls in Greenland, with no military forces, but are housing (for free) an U.S. Air Force Base in Thule (which cost the freedom of the Inughuit of nearby Uummannaq village, who were forced to leave their village in 1953, when the base was being built.) [...] The U.S. blames the Chinese or Russia for the geopolitical situation. But should we be more fearful of 1.3 billion people under autocratic regime or a country (and its military might) of only 330 million run by an indecent administration? The world stability was intact until recently but the U.S. is no longer what it was. Yes, this is deadly serious. And yes, we are afraid — of all three!*

- Aqqaluk Lynge, former president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council.  
2019 - Nuuk, Greenland.

# 1. Introduction

Few geographical regions in the world can be said to be as unique as the Arctic - sometimes also interchangeably referred to as the High North or the Circumpolar North. Usually characterized primarily by its harsh freezing climate, the Arctic is a polar desert located either at the extremities or the center of the world, depending on how it is looked at. It is exactly its perception as a region of its own that mostly defines how the Arctic is approached: is it a remote land akin to the Antarctic? a home of indigenous people? a natural mineral resource haven waiting to be uncovered? a pristine natural habitat to be protected? or an important economic and military geostrategic arena with grave security implications? To varying degrees, it is all of them at once, although which perception prevails tends to depend on the political situation *outside of the Arctic* at any given moment in time. Although both are defined as poles, the main difference between the Arctic and Antarctic is the Arctic's proximity to inhabited land. Where there are humans, there's politics - and given how today a total of 8 different countries have claimed to own a 'slice of the Arctic pie', factors of international relations irredeemably have come into play. And where nation states meet, as history tells us, conflicts may emerge.

Two of the eight Arctic countries, Denmark and the US, are at the centre of this thesis' research. Denmark extends to the Arctic through its claim to Greenland within its Commonwealth, while the US is considered an Arctic nation by extension of Alaska, one of its 50 states. The other 6 so-called 'Arctic countries' as have been defined today through international agreements are Canada, Russia, Iceland, Sweden, Norway and Finland - of these 6, only Canada, Norway and Russia, just like Denmark and the US, have coastal borders to the Arctic ocean and are thus considered Arctic littoral states. The core focus of the thesis is on the development of the rather small nation of Denmark as an Arctic nation, and its relationship to the world's largest superpower since the end of World War Two (WWII), the US. Through the application of poststructuralist discourse & foreign policy analysis as well as critical discourse analysis, the thesis approaches the developing relationship between the two nations throughout the Cold War up until today, and analyses how their seven decades of cooperation and security alliance have evolved throughout three main time periods: the Cold War (1945-1991), the post-Cold War era (1991-2017) and what I come to define as the 'new Cold War' era, sparked during the Donald Trump administration (2017 - ). The new Cold War is a concept that has been introduced in political science and international relations research during the last few years to explain the current global multipolarization and the great power competitions that have been emerging between the US, China, and Russia as a consequence (see Cohen, 2018; Davis & Wei, 2020; Zhao,

2019; Westad, 2019; Woodward, 2017). Donald Trump and his administration in particular have exacerbated the growing tension against the two new emerging superpowers, perceived as threats to US post-Cold War global hegemony. There are enough parallels, a lot of the research has shown, to compare this development to the 20<sup>th</sup> century Cold War fought between the US and the USSR (along with their respective allies). Thus, I too adopt this conception of a new Cold War to explain the phenomena happening within the context of my analysis, providing me with the legitimacy to establish it as a commencing era of its own.

This new confrontational approach to global power politics that is shaping the new-Cold War has led US decision-makers including Trump himself to also take a renewed interest in the Arctic. The Arctic indeed played a major role during the Cold War when the West through NATO (led by the US) and the USSR's arm race transformed the region into a sort of 'military theatre'. There were at the time very few ways to approach Arctic governance than through the lens of the Cold War, which for decades stalled any other non-militaristic attempts to development the region given how securitized the High North had become. Indeed, the perceived severity of the Cold War and the arms race closed off almost any type of regional collaboration on other matters such as environmental protection, indigenous rights, economic development, and more – i.e. matters that would have otherwise required closer cross-border cooperation. This all changed once the Cold War ended, but as the new one now emerges, many countries including Denmark fear that Arctic peace is being threatened by the looming shadow of remilitarization and resecuritization. For Denmark, these fears culminated when Donald Trump in August of 2019 offered to buy Greenland from Denmark – a move that sedimented the belief, even among sceptics of the Arctic's reaggravating situation, that Trump's administration were officially bringing the Monroe Doctrine and the Cold War back to the Arctic. And even worse so, they were bringing it directly onto Danish soil. Serious questions are now arising as to what a small country like Denmark is to do when the world's biggest economic and military power, which also happens to be its closest security ally, directly threatens its sovereignty while simultaneously jeopardizing its national security? Donald Trump and his administration managed to turn upside down Denmark's Arctic, foreign and security policy of the last 30 years within the span of only a few years, leaving the country's government in completely uncharted waters to face an uncertain future that may require a major shift in its foreign policy. Denmark has very little desire to return to its Cold War foreign and security policy as I show throughout this thesis - yet unfortunately, in the middle of great power competitions, small countries usually don't get to have the biggest say, thus leaving Denmark in a situation very much out of its own control and with a future that will be determined in big part by the actions of other countries.

As this thesis demonstrates, the three eras of formally established Denmark – US relations (Cold War, post-Cold War & new Cold War) have entailed three different approaches to Denmark’s security policy, each of them having affected its overall foreign policy and relation to the outside world - including, and often especially, the Arctic. That is why once I have analysed and defined Denmark-US relations through a more general recounting of their respective foreign policies and bilateral relation since WWII, the focus then shifts to the Arctic and applies the priorly gathered knowledge to an analysis of Denmark and the US as Arctic actors. In both sections, the research is laid out chronologically meaning that it starts off in the 1940s and builds its way up to today, as the historical background is necessary to frame and understand the events of the present, as well as to demonstrate the parallels between the original Cold War and current developments.

The research questions are thus defined as following, with the emphasis added on the main question:

- How has Denmark’s security policy and relation to the US developed since WWII?
- *What is the perceived effect of the Trump administration's policy to the position of Denmark in the Arctic?*

Based on a personal assessment of the assembled data on the two research questions, the discussion and concluding sections of the thesis are exploring what could be expected from a Biden administration with regards to potentially ‘normalizing the Arctic’, or if not, what this could mean for Denmark’s future in the Arctic and as well as its security policy overall. The island of Greenland is at the centre stage throughout this analysis, since it is Denmark’s only claim in the Arctic so long as Greenlanders choose to remain a part of the Danish Commonwealth. Greenland is hence central to Denmark’s Arctic policy while also being a territory of greater interest to a growing number of foreign actors attempting to stake their presence in a rapidly changing Arctic region. As mentioned earlier, the methods used focus on the usage and effects of political discourses in analysing and interpreting world events and international relations. The theoretical framework helps define exactly not only how the methods can be used, but also what theoretical aims they can achieve and how the language can be analysed and utilised as empirical data. Together they lay the foundation that explains why the chosen methods are suited to answer the research questions. The theories are those of *Securitization Theory* and *Region-Building Theory*.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1) *Poststructuralism, Identity & Securitisation Theory*

International Security Studies (ISS) is a subfield of International Relations (IR), in which the role of state identity and discourse as understood through poststructuralist linguistic studies has been of growing interest ever since the 1960s when it was first introduced within academia (Cardoso dos Santos, 2018:229). Mainly ever since the end of the Cold War, ISS gained an increased degree of prevalence as realism (another major IR Theory) lost its prominence due to its failure to explain many post-Cold War developments. What is now known as the *Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory* (ST) became of increasing relevance as it disconnected itself from the security perspectives that were based upon the objectivity or subjectivity of threat perception (ibid. 2013). Heavily influenced by contemporary poststructuralist train of thoughts, ST understands security as an intrinsic speech act with the ability to influence decision-making processes regarding security issues (Buzan et. al, 1998:26).

Three factors are featured in this specific theoretical framework, which are:

1. The securitising actor performing speech acts
2. The referent object which is understood as being under threat
3. The audience being the body that has to be convinced that emergency measures need to be adopted to guarantee the survival of the state, individual or society in question (ibid.)

ST as characterised by the Copenhagen School adopts a poststructuralist approach where the concept of identity is perceived as a position adopted by specific subjects within security discourses. This poststructuralist approach, developed amongst others by figures such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001:115), understands that identity doesn't have a unique essence which can lead security analysts to think that threats are the result of rational choices or historical necessity. As they define it, contingency is always present in identity discourses which constantly threatens their perceived 'naturalness' that often tends to be taken for granted by decision-makers within the security field. It is exactly because Laclau and Mouffe bring out the concept of identity as a consequence of discursive hegemonic strategies, that it makes it relevant to IR theory and ISS. According to Huysmans (1998:238), research in international security requires an analysis of how exactly the political identity of states are constructed by 'discourses of danger', consequently affecting the foreign policies that deal with security matters. In order to explain why some objects are perceived as being threatened while others aren't, can be said to be the main goal of ST as developed by the Copenhagen School.



From this school of thought, Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde (1998) developed the theory of *securitization* which emphasizes the role of discourses or speech acts to explain security developments, over the more traditional emphasis on material capabilities or subjective aspects. As they define it, security is what “quality actors [i.e. actors endowed with the social, cultural, economic or political capital to influence a specific discourse] inject into issues by securitising them, which means to stage them on the political arena” (Buzan et al 1998: 204). Once state leaders start using the term ‘security’, they perform the action of moving the issue at hand into a very specific arena in which special rights are granted to make prior acts that were perceived as impermissible permissible, in order to block the development of said threat (Wæver, 1989:5). As he explains:

*In naming a certain development a security problem, the ‘state’ can claim a special right [...]*  
Power holders can always try to use the instrument of securitization of an issue to gain control over it. By definition, something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so.  
(Wæver, 1995: 45, emphasis in original).

Through the act of ‘securitizing’, one can facilitate the conditions for turning a speech act into a security act through the utilization of security grammar. As Marcos Cardoso dos Santos (2018:232) writes, “The grammar of security and the social capital of the securitising actor are related to the formation of a chain of equivalences in security discourse”, concepts developed in part once again by Laclau and Mouffe.

According to Laclau and Mouffe (2001:115), what they define as a ‘lack’ which characterises all identities is the driving force that fosters discourse formations. Identities are inherently contingent (i.e. lacking any true essence) and are perceived solely as subject positions taken within specific discourses. This concept of ‘lack’ is a key element in poststructuralist discourse theory as developed by Jacques Derrida (1982), who distanced himself from the theories of structuralist thinkers such as Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure (1959) defined languages as consisting of signs that are formed by a signifier (a word) and a signified (an object). Yet in this fashion a signified cannot be understood in positive terms - i.e. its whole meaning is relational based on what it isn’t, more than what it actually is. For example, the word ‘father’ only makes sense within the context of other signs such as family, son, daughter, wife, etc. Comparing language to a game of chess, words, just like chess pawns, have no meaning outside of the chess board itself and the rules that define the game and gives them their value. It is exactly this intrinsically symbiotic, relational aspect of meaning which creates the

predicament of a 'lack' within identities - a signified is never truly complete and is instead always precarious.

Referring to Derrida (Derrida 1972:62-3), dos Santos (2018:234) writes:

Whereas Saussure fixes the meanings inside the system, Derrida deconstructs his theory, stating that if language has no given origin or centre, the infinite play of significance and difference produced excess and lack at the same time. Excess, because the meanings are not restricted to the system itself; lack, because the system can never be closed upon itself.

Laclau and Mouffe build upon Derrida's theories and argue that meanings can never be fixed permanently given the inherent conflicts present in the social field that constantly defy the hitherto established meanings (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001). This is where the concept of discourse hegemony comes in, which is described as the process of fixing meanings in order to make them seem natural. According to Antonio Gramsci (1978:15), specific social groups establish world conceptions through the process of hegemony which is why said process is in most cases a political act, a point which Laclau doubles down on as he claims that the constitution of any social identity is inherently an act of power. It is exactly because it is an act of power that a social identity must be studied by investigating the power mechanisms that make it possible (Laclau 1990:32). Within the context of securitization processes, it makes sense to rely on the theories of identity formation that Laclau and Mouffe lay out. Hegemonic discourses can establish the necessary discursive conditions of possibility that form identities, mainly through the logic of equivalence and difference, which make it possible to analyse the 'Self' and the 'Other'. For securitization to be able to happen, an antagonism or agonism between the Self and the Other needs to be established in which the Other poses a threat to the survival of the Self. According to Mouffe (2005:75), politics requiring collective identities always include the creation of a 'we' versus a 'they', which at its most radicalised state where morality categorises and delineates a 'good' versus an 'evil', opens up the possibility for a desire to exterminate the Other.

Generally speaking, IR tends to operate within an issue-structure system that permits the formation of international regimes. According to poststructuralists, these systems can be understood as *specific discourses* with varying degrees of sedimentation among states, and it is those discourses that end up shaping the set of rules that each state, through the elite political decisions, incorporate into domestic policy fields (Dos Santos, 2016:596). Such an example could be seen in the creation of terms such as the 'War on Terror' and the 'Axis of Evil' during the George W. Bush administration, which turned

the Other into not only a ‘they’ but an ‘evil they’, justifying the use of state military force through interventionist policies and foreign occupation in order to exterminate the terrorists that were perceived as posing a threat to the survival of the Self (hence justifying why it is possible for the US Department of *Defence* to act offensively, i.e. in the name of ‘self-defence’ or ‘self-preservation’). In this thesis I raise the concerns regarding what type of discourse and identities are being constructed and promoted when talking about the other state actors within the Arctic, as the vilification of other states carries very heavy implications towards Arctic security. Identity fragmentations and tribalist delineations between global superpowers fuelled in part by desires for regional control can easily create an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ cleavage that negatively impacts the ability to pursue peaceful governance, diplomacy and international cooperation in the Arctic.

What Laclau and Mouffe call *articulation* is the practice of “establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (Laclau and Mouffe 2001:105), which in turn is achieved through the construction of *nodal points*. Nodal points play an essential role in the fixation of meaning and the practice of articulation. The specific meanings of signifiers are defined through their relations with a nodal point, also sometimes termed the ‘master signifiers’ (Atkins, 2011:52), which hold the structural function in the unification of a discursive field. Given the number of signifiers floating within the field of discursivity void of conventional meaning, nodal points intervene by retroactively constituting their identity, as they fix these floating signifiers (i.e. discursive elements that assume new meanings once joined with other signifiers in novel ways. As an example, the concepts of ‘liberty’ or ‘equality’ may acquire one specific meaning should they be articulated in a liberal contra a conservative discourse) within a paradigmatic *chain of equivalence*. This practice bestows a precise meaning on the other elements within the chain and can hence unify a particular discourse (ibid.).

Within the context of securitization, which is understood as the establishment of hegemonic discourses regarding security issues, it is crucial to grasp how certain themes can function as nodal points and empty signifiers as this enables them to form a chain of equivalence and create a hegemonic discourse. Whereas I priorly defined floating signifiers as being discursive elements that assume new meanings once joined with other signifiers in novel ways, empty signifiers on the other hand (common examples tend to be terms such as ‘order’ or ‘the people’) cannot be said to have any intrinsic content and can thus be endowed by a large array of meanings. Howarth (2013:251) claims that empty signifiers are “means of representation that enable the building of alliances between different groups and identities by positing an enemy to be opposed and proposing solutions to the problems facing groups”, which can help explain how concepts can be moved from regular politics

to security politics. But for this to be able to happen, three theoretical conditions need to be met (Howarth 2000: 177; Laclau 1990: 66):

- 1) There needs to be a significant availability of potential empty signifiers
- 2) The signifiers need to be credible as a means of signification
- 3) Strategically placed agents need to be present who can construct and deploy the empty signifiers.

Without the availability and credibility of empty signifiers, the aforementioned securitising actors (strategically placed agents) that perform speech acts will have a far harder time convincing their audience of the referent object as being under threat, and the subsequent need for emergency measures. Wæver (2003) calls the existence of availability and credibility “layered structures”, and along with Laclau explains that successfully forming a hegemonic discourse based on these conditions can only be done on the backdrop of pre-existing sedimented discourses and practices amongst the audience at hand. This is because any given audience, group, or society already has certain deep seated cultural and/or political beliefs that will ultimately affect the actor’s ability to hegemonize a discourse in order to potentially securitize it. Hence according to Wæver, the actor needs to identify concepts of specific historical importance that can serve as ‘vehicles’ of identity production (Wæver, 2003:24). The state or the nation often serve as such vehicles given their ability to communicate officially, rally populations behind concepts of national identity while pointing to potential Others and holding the power to execute policies. When it comes to the current ongoing resecuritization of the Arctic, as the upcoming sections detail further, the collective memory of the Cold War serves as the main pre-existing deep seated cultural, historical and ideological backdrop that makes the sedimentation of ‘new Cold War’ security politics possible. Relying on old Cold War discourses, tropes and imaginaries has proven to be a powerful way to not simply to understand but also to frame and thus narrate current geopolitical realities in a very specific way. The importance of past security discourses in affecting the present is the reason why I recount in this thesis the specifics of Cold War tensions before moving on to current times – but more on that later.

When state officials securitize an issue, they are essentially acting upon and institutionalizing a discourse. Thus, a speech act is never merely a description of the world but is in many cases also able to change it. In this regard, speech is seen as being *performative* and not simply *constitutive*, which also means that speech can be used to create identities through the process of *performativity* (Buzan et al. 1998). Judith Butler defined performativity as an act “which brings into being or enacts that which it names [...] To the extent that a performative appears to ‘express’ a prior intention, a doer

behind the deed, that prior agency is only legible as the effect of that utterance” (1995:134); performativity is the “vehicle through which ontological effects [such as the effect of a doer behind the deed] are established” (Butler, quoted in Osborne, 1996:112), and is thus crucial in defining how state identities (the doers behind the deed of securitization) are shaped to life: they perform their identities when they articulate or attempt to hegemonize any given discourse.

This is important exactly because like I mentioned earlier, identities define who the Self and the Other - the ‘we’ and the ‘they’ - are, and that the state with its strongly legitimized historical and institutional agency, has the power to define this distinction by essentially acting discursively. Pierre Bourdieu explained that language is not only a tool of communication, but is also one of power, and that people as well as states use language to be trusted, obeyed, distinguished and respected (Bourdieu 1977:20). This notion will come to be important later in this thesis when understanding how nations dictate their security and foreign policy, and their relation not only to the act conveying influence through means of soft power, but also when defining their domestic value politics of the Self based on their relational definition and position to the Other.

## 2.2) *Arctic Imaginaries & Region-Building Theory*

Globalization has been an important factor in the development of *regions* around the world over the last couple of decades (Robertson, 1992). While discussions surrounding globalization often tend to emphasize how globalization has eroded national borders in favour of a borderless global order, there have been similar parallel developments in concepts of localization and regionalization. If the state is no longer the absolute authority, it doesn’t necessarily only mean that supranational institutions have taken over all governing roles, but also that smaller-scale or transnational systems of governance can emerge (Halliday, 2000; Gamble & Payne, 1996 ; Amoore et al., 2000). Localized regions have the benefit of often already having certain cultural, historical, or economic commonalities, and may thus even have common political and security interests. Globalization has facilitated the ability for regions to emerge through the erosion of national borders. Thus, the ways by which a region develops is not necessarily an organic given but is often a selective process based on specific political and historical grounds, influenced by which specific actors have the ability to access and get involved in the region-building initiatives. This could be the local inhabitants, civil society actors or the state, but they need to have enough influence to be able to partake in shaping the regional discourse. Region-building thus needs to be understood as a political effort requiring political capital from differing actors (Keskitalo, E. C. H., 2004:6).

This very concept of region-building has been developed by researchers such as Iver B. Neumann (Neumann, 1999; 1996; 1992), who compares region-building to the more commonly understood concept of nation-building that occurred throughout most of Europe during the 19th century. How one can define nation-building processes has been developed by scholar Benedict Anderson in his 1983 landmark work *Imaged Communities: on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*:

I propose the following definition of the nation: *it is an imagined political community* - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion [...] Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. (emphasis added).

As nations are approached as being at their core simply ‘imagined communities’, such notion can also be extended to larger ‘communities’ such as those within regions. Anderson’s conception doesn’t assume that areas naturally form a nation, should they be short of the continuous efforts that are necessary to construct it. Similarly, Neumann’s definition of regions mirrors that of Anderson’s definition of nations, as they are also in short imagined, constructed communities (Neumann 1992, 1999). For such an effort to be successful, Neumann draws on the findings of nation-building theorists such as Anderson, and how we understand that nationalism depends on the production of knowledge to legitimize and construct a national identity. This requires the formation of narratives, ‘stories’ specific to that very spatial unit, so as to create a feeling of belonging in said imagined community. That is why region-building cannot be said to be a singular process on one level alone, but rather a grander process undertaken by individuals and institutions capable of influencing such a conceptualization. A region cannot be predefined on its own, but more so is a set of practices that are constituted *through* the very process of definition (Applegate, 1999). Hence, it is created in and through discourse, and isn’t purely a given unit that ‘simply’ reflects essential traits of regions and its people. Paasi (1996:33) adds: “The institutionalization of regions thus refers to the process through which various territorial units are produced and manifest themselves in various social and cultural practices”. He delineates four factors which are essential to the creation of a regional identity and territorial imagination:

1. The area and shape of the region is selected through the definition and development of diverse practices.
2. A symbolic shape for the region is constructed.

3. Institutions relating to administration, government and education are developed that support as well as reinforce the region as a category and identity which can be referred to.
4. A presence of the region as it is being defined and its symbols within the media and other institutions within political and administrative structures. (ibid:33-35)

Symbols here are, according to Paasi (ibid:34-35):

‘keywords’ in the dominating story of a territorially based community. The most important symbol is doubtless the name of the territorial unit or region, which usually ‘gathers’ together its historical development, its important events, episodes and memories and joins the personal histories of its inhabitants to this collective heritage. Names of regions and other localities conform to the most classic definitions of symbolism.

Through performative repetition, these symbols end up not only reflecting but actually moulding the region, meaning that the region is never a fixed conceptualized area but is rather contingent and continuously reshaped through the discourse (Hønneland, 1998). Thus region-building has a homogenizing effect in the way that it creates new identities through discursive practices, and by extension creates new boundaries between the new Self and the new Other and hence the creation of new lines of conflict. Nonetheless, like all hegemonic discourses, regions are inherent expressions of continuous struggles over symbolic capital such as its own description of its spatiality and representation inside various social fields, to feign off potential counter-hegemonic processes threatening its perceived existence and legitimacy (Keskitalo, 2004:9). Given the aforementioned role of knowledge as power, there is a necessity for power-holding actors to continuously act to maintain the region’s existence. As Paasi (2000:8–9) defines it, regions are “not so much historical and cultural entities as products of regionalization policies. They exist at first perhaps in the namings, strategic definitions and proclamations of politicians, foreign policy experts and researchers.”

One can hardly talk about knowledge as power and the influence of institutional practices without mentioning the work of Michel Foucault. By taking a social constructivist approach to region-building, we see that regions are not given but rather constituted through discourse. Foucault defines a discourse as “constituted by all that was said in all statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its developments, indicated its various correlations, judged it, and possibly gave it speech by articulating its name, discourses that were taken as its own” (Foucault 1974:32). In their formation, discourses undergo processes of selection in which actors delimitate it by selecting what aspects are included within them, and which ones are left out. This approach to analysing

discourses which Foucault termed *archaeology* understands that knowledge (“that of which one can speak in a discursive practice” (ibid: 182)) is produced through a system of rules defining its form. These rules are always set by actors capable of influencing and delineating the discourse at hand.

Foucault understands that controlling a discourse is essentially a struggle of its own, conducted between “classes, nations, linguistic, cultural or ethnic collectivities” (Foucault, 1991:60), but that “the right to speak, ability to understand, licit and immediate access to the corpus of already formulated statements, and the capacity to invest this discourse in decisions, institutions, or practices— is in fact confined [...] to a particular group of individuals” (Foucault 1974:68). These notions thus put an emphasis on the connection of language (what can be said) more than merely language in and of itself, relating to the often political aspect of discourse formations in which systems of discursivity set in place arbitrarily end up framing and selecting what discourses comprise of. Rein & Shön (1993:146) define framing as a “way of selecting, organizing, interpreting, and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, argumentation, analysing, persuading, and acting” - and given how discourses are often shaped by and end of affecting the political, framing is a crucial feature in the construction of policy problems. These “[f]rames are not free-floating but are grounded in the institutions that sponsor them, and policy controversies are disputes among institutional actors who sponsor conflicting frames” (Schön & Rein, 1994:29), making frames inherently self-referential and limited to certain actors who can justify their value.

It is the selective nature of discourses that make necessary the discussions of dominating and hegemonic discourses, and how discourses end up exercising governing power. The power of hegemonic discourses, as was discussed earlier, often lie in their underlying subtlety and illusion of ‘naturalness’, making them “a lived system of meanings and values, not simply an ideology, a sense of reality beyond which it is, for most people, difficult to move, a lived dominance and subordination, internalized” (Williams 1977:108–115, quoted in Thompson, 1999). But in renouncing the organic nature of hegemonic discourses, Beere (2000:51) refers to the role of what he calls ‘lines of tendential forces’ that privilege the articulation of specific elements in the discourse and can set up powerful barriers to alternative articulation. No discourse is truly equally accessible to all actors, as one must have a degree of descriptive power and the ability to communicate within the discourse and be listened to, so these lines of tendential forces are drawn by actors with enough social, political, economic or institutional capital to influence the delimitations of the discourse. Simultaneously, a discourse can sometimes be defined in so narrow terms on such specific areas that the actors who are the most closely associated with the discourse core and hegemonic design are the sole ones able to express themselves (Keskitalo, 2004:13). In policy making, and especially when it comes to



interactions between international, transnational or subnational processes, and their relations to the domestic, only few actors with a significant amount of influential power can be deduced to having a say in the matter. Hanf & Underdal (1998:161) on this matter wrote the following:

International cooperation is not formulated, and certainly not implemented, in a vacuum. They [international initiatives] enter a 'regulatory space' already occupied by a set of problem definitions and policy strategies, as well as with constellations of supporting and opposing societal and bureaucratic forces.

International organizations are limited by sub-systems that monopolize decision-making processes and transmit it back to the states for implementation (Hanf & Underdal, 1998:164). Thus, pre-existing networks are vital resources for dominating a discourse, as they are the ones that can design specific arenas that serve the purpose of hegemonizing the discourse in favour of the actors that have been heavily invested in the effort. This gives them a significant advantage in the crafting of the policies that define the shape of the region-building process, and that is also why region-building cannot be viewed as a neutral or objective arena but an inherently political one (Keskitalo, 2004:15). With the emphasis on pre-existing networks comes the almost compulsory need to consider the role of historical developments in region-building. Paasi (1996:76) calls this aspect 'geohistory', which includes the analysis of historical dimensions that lay the foundation for the social processes, experiences and actions that render possible the development of a given region and its identity.

Region-building scholar Iver Neumann draws on Foucault when he says that present-day representations tend to draw from the memories of previous representations (Neumann, 1999:62). Historicity is one of Foucault's main scientific approaches that stresses out the importance of viewing understandings within their own specific historical, temporal and spatial contexts. When we understand the environment and social structures of a given time period, we can better understand how certain discourses and developments came to be, and how this then relates to present times. As a parallel to Foucault's archaeological method, his *genealogical method* helped complement the bigger picture. As he writes it "The archaeological dimension of the analysis made it possible to examine the forms themselves; its genealogical dimension enabled me to analyse the formation out of the practices and the modifications undergone by the latter" (Foucault 1985:11–12; cf. Lindgren 1988).

Both methods together allow for a more holistic vision of the role of power and knowledge in the process of region-building. Through their authoritative power, teachers, journalists, politicians and

other influential actors can define the narrative foundation upon which all discourses regarding the region-building process will be built - and thus consequently delegitimizing any political position which falls outside of these boundaries. The material condition of labour and power relations within a specific historical context have a strong influence on what a discourse will end up looking like. The politically and economically disenfranchised have very little influential agency to have any saying in the institutionalization of a region. This structuralist approach understands that certain individuals, groups and classes will always have a far bigger say in the region-building process given their greater ability to produce knowledge. It is in fact rather imperative for these actors, if they wish to gain more prominence in the governance and bureaucracy of the region, to engage in knowledge-building as their institutional influence and legitimacy otherwise cannot be established (Keskitalo, 2004:17). “There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” Foucault wrote (Foucault, 1979:27–28; quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983:115), which is exactly why a criticism and historical analysis of discourse is needed to understand how certain discourses end up being accepted as ‘truths’.

This unique relationship between power and knowledge exemplifies itself once a discourse becomes institutionalized. Institutions have the power to turn hegemonic discourses into what Laclau calls *social imaginaries* (Laclau, 1990:64), meaning that their authority is so strongly established that it becomes an almost unquestionable established public ideology - i.e., ‘truths’. That is not to say that all regions ultimately become social imaginaries, as multiple perceptions can coexist at the same time. This is particularly true for regions that have undergone their region-building processes rather recently, or whose political situations have changed often enough to create a multitude of prevailing historical understandings - the Arctic can easily be said to fall under this categorization. For such regions, the region-building process can be said to be unfinished, unaccomplished, and thus contingent, fragile and malleable. If we compare region-building to nation-building, many nation-building processes have been so long in the making that the legitimacy of their state institutions seems almost impossible to question. That is when the institutionalization of discourse can be said to have achieved the level of social imaginary. Still, the role of these institutions in getting to this point of legitimizing their very existence cannot be understated - and legitimacy, as Weber (1921) reminds us, is crucial for institutions to justify their exercise of power over the people it claims to represent. In more insidious systems, they can even shape discourses so that subordinate individuals discursively frame their own subordination, thereby perpetuating it. Such is the strength of those who are powerful enough to performatively create realities by simply describing them into being - and so it works for region-building as well.

This leads us to the Arctic and how it came to be contextualized as a region of its own. At its core, it can be difficult to pinpoint exactly what one means when one uses the term ‘the Arctic’. What is or is not considered ‘Arctic’ varies greatly depending on who one happens to ask, when in time one asks, or what the question might be. Yet the simple fact that we can talk about the ‘Arctic’ as a region entails that there is enough perceived common ground to be able to conceive it as a holistic entity (although not entirely unproblematically). Region-building theory details that the ‘Arctic’ like most if not all regions are “discussed into being” (Keskitalo, 2004:17) and thus open for contestation, deconstruction and investigation. It is because of this intrinsic constructiveness and hence discursive incompleteness that some tend to refer to the ‘Arctic’ in brackets. Constructiveness entails that a region-building process has been going on over the years with the aim of defining the Arctic in specific terms to achieve specific aims, depending on who is involved in spearheading this process.

It is not as simple as just claiming the Arctic to be a delimited geographical area, given that the extent of this area has been differently defined throughout time, location and institution. Some of these definitions have been based for example on the tree line, temperature, permafrost, marine delineations, and the sun-height (ibid.:30). Nonetheless there is today a more widely accepted geographical conception of the Arctic, as an area stretching from the North Pole to at least the delineating line that is the Arctic Circle at 60° latitude North, meaning that it incorporates within its surface parts of 8 different nation states considered to be ‘The Arctic 8’: Denmark (through Greenland), Sweden, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Canada, Russia and the US. Reaching this understanding means that the Arctic as a region became accepted into being through a process of institutionalization, nowadays most strongly exemplified by the pan-Arctic organization known as the Arctic Council established in 1996. The Arctic Council as Young (2015:15) writes it “has become a symbol of the emergence of the Arctic as a distinct region in the international society”, and created through this process of discourse institutionalization its very own conceptualization of what constitutes and delineates the ‘Arctic’, also defined as the ‘status quo’ imaginary by Steinberg et al. (2016), i.e. the hegemonic discourse that receives its legitimacy from international law and treaties.

As I have priorly denoted, region-building theory invokes the concepts of power and knowledge as main drivers in shaping the discourses that in turn construct the regions. Which aspects of said region are the most strongly amplified end up creating the perception of what the region is and hence how it should be governed. When it comes to the Arctic, this could be regarding different concerns such as “environmental protection,” “indigenous cooperation”, “infrastructure development”, “national sovereignty” etc., that depending on the ways that these have been involved in the construction

process have found different weightings amongst different actors (Keskitalo, 2004:14). Past historical conceptions and experiences by specific actors largely end up determining the expression of the Arctic as a region, and thus through genealogy and archaeology, it is possible to trace the emergence of a perspective and expose how the discourse that forms the region is constructed, and who is doing the construction. As is detailed in *Negotiating the Arctic*: “Arctic cooperation is formed from several different historically constituted sources and actors who pursue different needs. This of course makes the question of power and its relation to knowledge central, particularly in considering the question of whom this approach provides with an opportunity for expression” (ibid.:17). Endeavouring this process of deconstruction requires the critical approach of discourse analysis (detailed in the method section further on) which understands that no region exists as a given, but as the result of region-building efforts and specific understandings of history that need to be traced, rather than assumed and generally accepted as ‘true’.

As Laclau explained, when a discourse becomes so deeply accepted to the point of being almost incontestable, it establishes itself as a social imaginary (Laclau, 1990:64). Until such a feat is accomplished, different contingent imaginaries ‘compete’ for hegemony. Although the geographical notion of the Arctic is today hardly contested, its geopolitical conception is still vastly fluctuating. As is described in *Contesting the Arctic*:

In the case of the Arctic, depending on one's perspective, the Arctic may be seen as an integral part of the existing nation-state, a sub-national indigenous group's homeland, a lost hearth of the national soul, a resource colony that is essentially empty of humans and that exists to be exploited (whether through mining or nature tourism) or preserved, a space of everyday activities (i.e. a 'home'), or the Arctic may be simply forgotten. (Steinberg et. al., 2015:6)

All of these are differing imaginaries that have had varying degrees of prevalence over time, and all still exist to this day holding at their core different implications and potential consequences. Constructing an Arctic discourse ends up shaping an imaginary, which in turn affects how individuals and institutions - both within and outside the Arctic - make sense and respond to the region's dynamism (ibid.:9). Images matter, especially within the context of the Arctic which is too often vastly misunderstood by policy makers and powerful actors who hold the ability to shape the Arctic discourse, often located far outside the Arctic and with little experience with the faraway region. In fact, they tend to too often resort to images, myths, stories, tropes, fears, or outdated knowledge to make decisions regarding the Arctic - sometimes with unfortunate yet avoidable consequences. Images can take on lives of their own, which in turn can be exploited to support a specific imaginary,

a specific discourse (ibid.:33). In *Contesting the Arctic*, Steinberg et al. (2015:16-17) identified six main competing Arctic imaginaries, on top of the 'status quo' discourse institutionalized by the Arctic Council – i.e. the one represented by international law and multilateral treaties. These are:

- The Arctic as *terra nullius*, an unclaimed yet potentially claimable lawless space towards which individual states can freely expand, while claiming land, water, ice, or seabed outside the normative regulations of international law.
- The Arctic as a *frozen ocean*, thus different from all other oceans with different norms and legal regimes. This imaginary borders on the *terra nullius*, but instead of claiming unlimited opportunities for territorial expansion, the Arctic is a unique space with different opportunities.
- The Arctic as an *indigenous statehood*, with the possibilities for new governing formations replicating the old ones to emerge but rooted indigenous ambitions for self-determination and autonomy.
- The Arctic as a *resource frontier*, where states are more interested in resource extraction than territory expansion, providing many new potential opportunities for state and corporate income.
- The Arctic as *transcending statehood*, similar to the imaginary of indigenous statehood, but with the implication that the Arctic is a region with the unique opportunity of establishing new cross-boundary systems of governance that challenge the fundamental assumptions behind the modern, territorial state. And finally;
- The Arctic as a *nature reserve*, with pristine nature that needs to be protected from human exploitation in the same way that the Antarctic has been, as a type of state-free region.

Given the incorporation of the Arctic within the nation-state systems that started about two centuries ago, the prevailing imaginaries have always strongly reflected the political realities outside of the Arctic. This is why it is possible to talk about the 'spillover effect' of non-Arctic related matters into Arctic matters, affecting how it becomes governed as an inherent international region. The potentiality of such a spillover effect is at the core of this thesis' research, given the earlier detailed ongoing processes of global multipolarization and securitization that have been developing over the last few years. Discourses of a securitized Arctic can end up taking over the institutionalized imaginary established by the Arctic Council forcing it to compete for symbolic capital and hegemony. Old Arctic imaginaries don't die out easily, and as I show in the empirical part of this research, they happen to still play a crucial role in influencing the current and future conceptions of the Arctic and thus how nation states and their lawmakers shape their policies towards the High North.

### 3. Methods

The research methods used in this thesis will be two different variants of discourse analysis: *Poststructuralist Discourse & Foreign Policy Analysis* and *Critical Discourse Analysis*. These two methods are partially intertwined in the way that they both are used to analyse discourses, but given their different approaches on the matter, and their different relevancy for different contexts, I have chosen to include both separately. In the prior theoretical framework part of this thesis, a lot has already been said on the nature of discourse theory, which also serves as background for understanding the fundamentals of the methods used henceforward.

#### 3.1) *Poststructuralist Discourse & Foreign Policy Analysis*

Poststructuralist discourse analysis (PDA) was an important addition to IR, especially when it came to foreign policy analysis (FPA), hence its relevance and importance lies in its ability to be used as a tool to analyse state foreign policy. In IR theory, poststructuralists hold that states as well as other political entities want to uphold particular visions of themselves, something which they attempt to do through policy discourses (Hansen, 2016:95). Given this cruciality of projecting a particular image of themselves, foreign policy discourses are fundamental in the construction of these visions: they can serve to draw a line between the state and what defines its own identity, as well as what falls outside of this image and can be categorized as ‘other’. When we adopt poststructuralist theories for studying foreign policy, it means that the focus is on the way in which foreign policy decisions are taken and legitimized (or undermined) within the general public sphere. Based on the concept of discourse as that which “delineates the terms of intelligibility whereby a particular ‘reality’ can be known and acted upon” (Doty, 1996: 6), poststructuralists demonstrate that while we often assume international relations and domestic politics to be distinct political areas, such assumptions aren’t necessarily organic but rather maintained through academic and policy discourses and practices (Hansen, 2016:96). Foreign policies are very much dependent on the representations that states attempt to uphold about themselves, their populations and/or institutions, and are thus often implemented in such ways as to either assist or deter a specific image, and discourse is the way to achieve just that.

As I’ve already specified earlier, language isn’t simply a transparent medium that conveys the empirical world, but rather is a sort of practice (Shapiro, 1988:11). That is why it can be more important to ask which norms, values, and identities are being created in language, more than whether what is being conveyed is true or not. Language is endowed with a political power as it is not only a

medium of communication, but also one of *mystification* (Walker, 1986:495). When Ronald Reagan called the Soviet Union the 'Evil Empire', he was not simply conveying neutral information, but creating a new reality through discourse - one that had serious implication in the realm of global security and international relations studies, which at the time had paid very little attention to the power of discourse in defining international political climates (Hansen, 2016:96). It was around that time that poststructuralism became more seriously incorporated in IR theory as a subfield of its own, establishing itself as a practical approach to study current events especially within the field of security, foreign policy, and IR.

Poststructuralists see foreign policy as being driven by discursive interests, meaning that they are articulated in the language of foreign policy actors who can claim that for example going to war against Iraq is in the interest of the American people. As Weldes puts it (1999:15) "National interests [...] are social constructions that emerge out of a ubiquitous and unavoidable process of representation" - interests and intentions that are constructed in discourse. In the case of going to war against Iraq for example, such an intervention could be framed as being in the interest of Americans, thus legitimizing it, when the US government claimed that the sovereignty of a 'people' (i.e. the Iraqis) was threatened by 'its' government, and hence the need to protect them became an imperative - a political move that was also seen as a way of strengthening the status and image of the US as a great liberal superpower. Not only the US but multiple Western countries who had deployed troops in Afghanistan had stated that the troops were there in part to protect Afghan women. Regardless of whether this claim was true or not, Afghan women did become an important debate topic in both national and international forums at the time (Hansen, 2016:98). Women's rights have been an important pillar of Western liberal values for the last couple of decades, and thus intervening militarily to defend women abroad could be perceived as being well aligned with Western values. As Campbell (1992:8) defines it, "foreign policy [needs to] be understood as a political practice central to the constitution, production, and maintenance of political identity" - in short, not only does foreign policy serve as a way to draw a line between the 'inside' and the 'outside', it also helps define who the 'we' are who enact the policies. This important function of poststructuralism explains why it became of prevalence as an IR theory during the 1980s when the East/West relations were rather tense, and there was a need to analyse the identity dynamics between the 'Self' (The West / NATO) and its relation to the radically different 'Other' (The Soviet Union / Warsaw Pact) (Hansen, 2016:100).

Identities are invoked as the main precondition for the implementation of foreign policy in poststructuralist theory, when as for example it is claimed that 'we are going to war against the Taliban

to protect the liberal values that define who we are'. Playing on these identities are preconditions for actions in poststructuralist theory, meaning that there is a strong performative element to the expression of identity in the way that they are shaped through action and repetition (Butler, 1990:33). Because identity is perceived as intrinsically performative in poststructuralist discourse analysis, it can't operate as an explanation or be tested against other 'variables' that explain foreign policy decisions or behaviour (Hansen, 2016:101). It is merely the *practices* through which 'otherness' is constituted in relation to 'our' identity, and through the use of language, that foreign policy actors can invoke this sense of 'inside' identity to make their policies appear legitimate, necessary, and 'realistic' to their relevant audiences.

When it comes to studying and analysing foreign policy, which is an important part of this thesis, PDA understands that foreign policy is above all a discursive practice using language as its core social medium in order to create desired meanings. PDA attempts to provide a so-called 'road map' that can show the main foreign policy positions and what representations sustain them (Ibid.:102). Identifying what 'key representations' (which in poststructuralist discourse theory could also be referred to in more Laclauian terms as 'nodal points') structure debates on foreign policy issues and legitimizes state action, is what PDA is most equipped to do. For example, there were two main key representations in Western debates surrounding the Bosnian War during the 1990s: that of the conflict as being a 'Balkan' war, and that of the war being a 'genocide' (Hansen, 2006:52). Whereas the former representation may make the conflict appear more regional and a war which the West shouldn't get 'dragged into', the latter representation implied a strong responsibility for the West to intervene and stop the genocide. The aim of foreign policy discourse analysis is based on this example to find and analyse the main discursive structures within debates and decision-making, but also the more subtle differences and variations in the discourse. Given PDA's view of materiality as constructed in discourse, it is not always as important to find out whether claims being made are true or false, but rather what the political *implications* are when we adopt a particular representation based on a specific reading of history and current events (Hansen, 2016:104). That is why discourse analysis also must consider the broader scope of any actor who influences the discourse, meaning also the political parties not in government, the media, experts, and any others who can be deemed to engage in the debate (popular cultural as well, for example).

The analysis also needs to be dynamic given how policy on a specific issue tends to shift in the timespan that passes from when the issue first appears on the agenda of decision makers up until it is - or can be claimed to have been - solved. A dynamic discourse analysis hence also traces the way in which discourses change, i.e. how policy makers alter their representations of 'the problem' and



'the policy' as events unfold (ibid.:106). This focus on the historicity of events relates to Foucault's genealogical perspective as described earlier, starting from the present time and tracing back to find out how that which we consider to know as 'truths' came to be established, and hence also which elements are left out or marginalized by these current representations. This method and perspective can help lay a solid foundation for the analysis of present discourses, given how the way in which discourse and foreign policy are symbiotically linked means that analysing past foreign policy doctrines can help us contextualize present developments based on what type of discourses are currently being generated or perpetrated. In this thesis, this means that it is useful when it comes to analysing the foreign policy of both the Danish and US states, and the development of their diplomatic relations and security partnerships as understood through the analysis of their own national interests, projected values and identities - especially in the post-Cold War era.

### 3.2) *Critical Discourse Analysis*

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be seen as an important complementary method to PDA. Whereas PDA incorporates genealogy and traces texts constituted as significant for foreign policy, CDA is useful in studying the more bureaucratic environment and 'behind the scenes' elements within decision-making processes. PDA can and has been amply criticized for its lack of interest in finding out the *causes* (focusing rather on the *consequences*) that can explain foreign policy, which is a lack that CDA can partially amend. CDA can be defined as "a theory and method analysing the way that individuals and institutions *use* language" (Richardson, 2007:1; emphasis in original) with a focus on the "relations between discourse, power, dominance and social inequality" (van Dijk, 1993:249) and how discourses produce, reproduce and maintain these relations of dominance and inequality. Fairclough goes further in his definition of CDA, stating that "[CDA] analyses texts and interactions, but it does not *start* from texts and interactions. It starts rather from social issues and problems, problems which face people in their social lives, issues which are taken up within sociology, political science and/or cultural studies." (2001: 26; emphasis in original)

In such a way, CDA can be used to research how the microstructures of language are connected to and help shape the macrostructures of the society at large (Mayr, 2008:9) Discourse, understood by CDA as the use of language in speech and writing, needs to be regarded as a form of social practice - and once perceived as such comes an implied need to deal with issues that are important for social analysis. This could be among others the *institutional* circumstances of a discursive event, and how it shapes the very nature of discursive practices and the constitutive effects of discourse. Given that discourse is understood as a social practice, CDA then needs to integrate the "social and cultural

goings-on which the communicative event is part of” (Fairclough, 1995a: 57). Hence when it comes to institutional discourses, the wider institutional practices should be dissected in order to figure out how they help perpetuate or halt certain social practices - an example of this could be: how do differing institutions (state, media, organizations) through their discursive practices help propagate or mitigate societal racism?

CDA concerns itself with exposing the often underlying, hidden ideologies that are constructed, reinforced or reflected both in everyday and institutional discourses, and thus the study of ideology is a rather crucial part of the method. Fairclough (1992:87) defines ideologies as being “significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities) which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination.” He goes on to describe ideology as “meaning in the service of power” (1995b: 14), a description that goes hand-in-hand with the way that CDA sees ideologies as serving the interests of very specific groups in society endowed with social power. In this fashion, through ideology, they can ensure that the practices, events and behaviours that benefit them are still regarded as being legitimate and common sense. This makes ideology a very powerful tool as it can very subtly shape and maintain the way people interpret the world around them - hence hegemony, which Gramsci called “domination by consent” (1971).

Along with domination comes the implication of power, which is also an important component of CDA. Weber (1914) pointed out that power doesn’t only reside within states, but just as well in other sovereign organizations, such as the church. Controlling the discourse, which then helps shape the accepted ideology, is the main way that institutions legitimize themselves and hence the established power structures within society. Legitimization also comes in the form of delegitimizing opposing counter-hegemonic groups who are attempting to affect the discourse and challenge the accepted ideology in ways that are unfavourable to powerholders. The process of delegitimization implies a certain degree of social control that needs to remain somewhat ‘invisible’ as to not expose the doings of the guilty party (Mayr, 2008:2). Should it become public, or common knowledge, it could very well threaten their legitimacy and hence ability to control the discourse and the accepted ideology. This conceptualization of power comes with many institutional implications, leading intellectuals such as Noam Chomsky to claim that “propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state” (Chomsky, 1991:15).

This subtlety in influence is what led Gramsci (1971) to say that power in democratic states is not exercised coercively, but routinely. By acting in such a way, dominant groups in society establish

hegemonic discourses that have the power to persuade subordinate groups to accept the moral, cultural, political values and institutions of the dominant groups as their own. The way that power is exercised may not always seem obvious, especially when it is being done in such a seemingly passive way that subtly makes coercion seem like consent, and ideology as truth; such is the awesome power of hegemonizing through language. It is exactly because CDA concerns itself with how discourse constructs beliefs, opinions and ideological (hegemonic) attitudes that tend to be perceived as common sense that it is an important tool for critical analysis overall. In this thesis, CDA is relevant especially within the context of Arctic governance. Dealing with both low and high politics, the intricate and unique geopolitical situation of the Arctic in the post-Cold War era requires tools that can analyse its regional attributes as well as the influence of the parties involved in shaping, maintaining and challenging the discourse over the last thirty years especially, but also before that. How it is possible to move from one Arctic imaginary being the hegemonic one to another is the type of questions CDA can help answer, and is especially relevant now as the liberal 'status quo' imaginary institutionalized by the Arctic Council is being challenged by new global power dynamics and their counter-hegemonic discourses. Who fuel which Arctic discourses and promote what specific imaginaries as well as why, is what CDA can help us find out.

#### **4. Data**

In both PDA and CDA, language is the main data used for research. When utilizing language as data comes an implied responsibility of conducting fair, accurate and scientifically sound research despite the intricacies of dealing with what can be perceived as rather complicated and unquantifiable data. Discourse, understood as the process of meaning-making, is intrinsically multimodal, meaning that it takes place and is characterized by multiple different modes of activity or occurrence. Some researchers in discourse analysis (mainly postfoundationalists) may find it more useful to analyse nonverbal objects that affect meaning-making, such as urban landscapes, statues, signs, images, popular culture and others. This is because it has been becoming clearer in discourse analysis research that human psychology and behaviours that shape discourses are not only affected in language, but by socially influential elements all around us, whether we're truly conscious about it or not. The inclusion of such discursive elements has helped deepen the field of discourse analysis to better understand how discourse hegemony is achieved.

For the most part, this thesis focuses on the usage of the more 'traditional' understanding of what shapes a discourse (with some few exceptions), i.e. spoken and written linguistic outputs from relevant sources of influence, as they pertain better to my chosen theoretical frameworks,

methodologies, and research question overall. This is done through an analysis of primary and secondary sources which is paired with the findings of the foreign policy analysis. This enables me to contextualize and identify the political actions undertaken either in accordance or as a consequence of what specific discourses are being promoted. Data considered significant in knowledge, discourse, and ideology production for this research include:

- Statements from government officials, spoken or written, focusing either on the intents (CDA) or consequences (PDA) of said statements, depending on the context used and their empirical relevance. This includes statements from Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs / Secretary of States, defence and military officials of various kinds, ambassadors and other diplomats, and diverse party members from Danish and American political parties – mainly, officials that have some relation to either Danish or US foreign and security policy. Politicians, as lawmakers, are the ones most closely associated with policy and are thus the ones who can act politically on a discourse by either institutionalizing or securitizing it and are therefore the most crucial sources of empirical data for this research.
- Journalistic articles published in reputable and widely read newspapers, mainly from the US and Denmark. The two biggest Danish newspapers, *Politiken* and *Berlingske*, are used extensively, as well as major US newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Well-established online Arctic publications such as *Arctic Today* are also relied on, as well as statements made by journalists and experts on mainstream nationwide or even global TV channels such as CNN. Journalists and experts from well-established media organizations possess enough descriptive power to become knowledge producers and influence policy discourses. As the ‘4<sup>th</sup> pillar of democracy’, the media can influence both policy-making as politicians either consume the medias themselves directly and possibly absorb their point of views, or may be affected by the pressure of public opinion, itself also affected by media narratives. The media also sometimes amplify certain politicians’ or the government’s point of views, hence helping hegemonize their discourses through their sheer institutional power. In the words of Herman & Chomsky (1988), the media have the power to “manufacture consent” for certain state policies, and are especially vital when it comes to getting the general population to be on board with more controversial policies such as those usually enacted as consequences of state securitization, but also have the power to cripple the process altogether should they chose to.
- Academic papers and books that provide analytical insights are also used either as secondary sources to put primary sources into their respective contexts and shedding light on their validity and relevance for this research (this includes at times direct quotations from the paper

or book's authors), or as resources through which to find relevant primary sources. When going through the history of Denmark – US relations for example, engaging in extensive historical and foreign policy analysis, mainly secondary sources such as books and scientific papers have been used. Primary sources are used in this context to demonstrate the correlation between discourse, foreign policy, region-building, and securitization.

- To a very little extent, non-verbal actions, events, or artifacts believed to be relevant in the production of meaning-making will be included and analysed as well. This refers mainly to how certain elements of popular culture or political actions have been deemed significant enough in affecting a specific discourse that they need to be considered and analysed as well. The planting of the Russian flag by a scientific expedition at the geographic North Pole in 2007 is an example of such non-verbal actions, given its subsequent widespread political ramifications in changing to course of the Arctic security discourse.

The material is found by searching through newspaper archives, government reports, press releases, interviews, scientific journal databases and libraries available to me at the time of the research. The inability to travel abroad and the restrictions imposed globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic limited my resources almost exclusively to what could be found online, as compared to potentially being able to visit state archives in Denmark. For example, some books I found that could have been relevant for my research were not available to me as they would have required me to visit libraries in Copenhagen, as these were the only places I was able to locate them. I do still believe though that the material and data I was able to gather despite the circumstances have been enough to provide satisfactory answers to my research questions. A lot of the searches for material were done by using keywords and terms in the different archives and databases, within specified chosen timeframes depending on what period or event I was researching, then going through all the search results in order to avoid missing out on crucial data as much as possible. It should also be added that given the focus of this research, a significant amount of the analysed speech acts from Danish sources are translated by myself directly from their original Danish to English. Although some translated statements may for example include metaphors or figures of speech that cannot literally be translated to English without their meaning being lost, I have attempted to approach the translating process with the primary focus on maintaining the truthfulness and essence of the statements in order to avoid misinterpretations.

## 5. History of Denmark - United States Relations: 1945 - 2020

Given the aim of this thesis, the first 'étape' is to lay out the historical and empirical background that serves as the basis for the analysis. This entails detailing the specifics of US - Denmark relations dating back to the early 20th century, but especially since after WWII, when it became clear that the US emerged as the major superpower with unprecedented global influence (Lafeber, 1986). Prior to those times, it was mainly the older European colonial powers such as the UK and France that dominated the world - but costly wars on European soil, decolonization and other political and economic turmoil confined them to having to accept smaller spheres of influence, and a new emphasized focus on regional and European peace-keeping projects rather than ambitious quests for global domination. For this reason, my analysis begins in the aftermath of WWII and the ensuing Cold War, then moving into the post-Cold War era all the way to the Trump presidency and today's new Cold War. Based on earlier established theoretical frameworks and methods, the research is done through the lens of primarily poststructuralist discourse & foreign policy analysis, with an added focus on securitization theory in perspective to some of the priorly developed IR theories. This very part, laying out the foundations of US - Denmark relations in a more general, overall perspective defined around specific and crucial historical developments, serves as the basis upon which the case study on US - Denmark relations in the Arctic will be compared to.

### 5.1) 1945 - 1991: *Reserved Isolationism Inside the American Grossraum*

The early years of the US's development as a global superpower could very much be perceived to be in line with realist theory, as it was, along with basic *realpolitik*, the prevailing way of approaching international politics in the West prior to WWI. By the end of the 19th century, productivity outputs in the US were soaring faster than the rest of the world, and thus new concerns regarding the US's ability to absorb its own ever-increasing industrial and agricultural output within its domestic market led the country and its political lobbyist to look abroad for new markets to expand into (Kaspersen, 2008:94). International trade and the export of US products became an integral part of US foreign policy and its national interests. From this moment on, the US properly started to act as a global player capable of influencing the world in line with its domestic interests - and along with it came the necessity to develop its military capabilities in order to protect said interests wherever in the world it may be deemed needed. After WWII, when the European continent was severely weakened while the US stood for a third of all global production, the US started developing what Carl Schmitt (the German realist theorist often referred to as the Thomas Hobbes of the 20th century (Collins, 2010)) called a 'Grossraum' of its own - a political and military composition of states led by a unique, singular, powerful center-state with the aim of countering similar yet rivalling compositions

(ibid.:98). Although Schmitt originally developed his theory on Grossraum constellations to conceptualize the European geopolitical situation of the inter-war period, it proved to be a relevant frame of reference for Cold War global power dynamics as well. With the emergence of the USSR as another Grossraum, the US according to realist principles of *eat-or-be-eaten* thinking, doubled down on its intentions to spread its sphere of influence to other Western nations along capitalist and liberal ideological lines, in order to protect its own interests in Europe. Defining itself as being the 'leader of the *free world*' (defined in contrast to the supposedly *unfree* communist nations), the US successfully hegemonized these very two words to be associated almost solely with its own understanding, antonym to communist and socialist ideology.

Maintaining this Grossraum with allied nations required mainly the use of so-called 'soft power'. The US couldn't legitimize its self-appointed role through the coercive use of military force in Europe, in the fashion that the USSR did, as this would directly stand against its preached liberal values and itself as the leader of the free world. This liberal hegemonic project thus required the use of multilateralism and institutionalism to maintain (Ikenberry, 2004:85), which the US achieved through for example the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), by pioneering the formation of the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), World Trade Organization (WTO; priorly known as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)), and even by assisting European nations in creating new internal alliances such as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) which later on became the European Union (EU). In short, the US seized upon the power vacuum left in Europe after WWII to shape the Western world in its image (Kaspersen, 2008:120, 124)

After WWII, there was still a great amount of fear and mistrust from Denmark towards other European nations - primarily Germany who had occupied Denmark from 1940 to 1945 - and therefore welcomed the protective wing of the US, joining NATO already in 1949 when it was first created (ibid.:137). Leading political parties within the Danish parliament and government at the time such as Venstre (the liberal party) and Det Konservative Folkeparti (DKF, the conservative party) already strongly aligned with American liberal values and the idea of the minimal state. Nonetheless, by joining NATO, Denmark chose to abandon the foreign policy tradition of maximum neutrality it had maintained since the Napoleonic Wars, sacrificing certain elements of freedom and national sovereignty in return for security and survival (ibid.). This erosion of freedom also applied to domestic politics, where Venstre, DKF and even the Social Democrats (SD) cooperated with the US to crack down on internal communist movements within Denmark. Given that Denmark had in 1948

accepted the US post-war reconstruction help provided through the Marshall Plan, it was mandated by the US in return to make sure that it would remain a liberal democracy, thus legitimizing all and any anti-communist state actions against its own citizens (ibid.:138). With a certain irony, maintaining a liberal state meant partially abandoning liberal values of personal freedoms and civil liberties - both in the US and in Denmark. Danish sovereignty was hence already (although minimally) jeopardized by the US.

On American soil, justifying an expensive military build-up and using taxpayer money to rebuild other countries was not exactly appreciated by a large portion of American citizens who, around the end of the Second World War, still preferred a more isolationist and protectionist approach to global politics (ibid.:118). Creating and leading an American-lead Grossraum required heavy persuasion efforts from the US government at the time - a feat they accomplished by playing on the tribal emotions of Americans by creating an 'Us vs. Them' duality between the US and the USSR, defined in many other terms such as the battle of capitalism vs. communism, democracy vs. authoritarianism, freedom vs. tyranny, good vs. evil, etc. As I elaborated on earlier in the theory section, referring to Chantal Mouffe (2005:75), politics requiring collective identities always includes the creation of an antagonism between a 'we' and 'they', which can develop into a delineation of 'good' versus an 'evil' if concepts of morality and justice are emphasised discursively; such a feat can be accomplished through a strong usage of state propaganda. For example, a poll taken right after Winston Churchill's famous 'Iron Curtain' speech showed that only 18 percent of the American public approved of it. A mere month later, 85 percent of Americans were approving of the speech and its message, as the US government in between had put great effort in pushing for Cold War rhetoric and emphasizing the terminologies such as the 'iron curtain', which today still is a widely used metonymy in Cold War discourse (Sulzberger, 1946).

In many ways, the Cold War discourse was developed and constructed as a 'necessary evil' to rally the American population to support US foreign policy goals and its increasing internationalist vision. Once the conflict was defined in these terms, and the discourse became generally accepted nationally, supporting US hegemony became a question of moral imperative and patriotism. American political scientist Michael Paul Rogin went as far as to use the term *political demonology* to describe the way in which the US during the Cold War used the 'Othering' of the Soviet Union as a means to achieve a national cultural identity and political unity. As he writes it: "The counter-subversive needs monsters to give shape to his anxieties and to permit him to indulge his forbidden desires. Demonization allows the counter-subversive, in the name of battling the subversive, to imitate his enemy" (Rogin, 1987: xiii). This process allowed for a certain double-standard between the values



preached and the actions undertaken by the state, especially since the discourse surrounding the USSR also became framed as a matter of national security. But more consequentially, the Soviets, other communist or socialist countries and leaders, as well as any left-leaning American became perceived as 'threats' to be contained, if not exterminated, in the name of 'national security'.

As I've discussed earlier, securitization can be defined as a process which once undertaken can give the state special permission to act in ways that would otherwise be impermissible before. The spread of communism became under the Truman administration (1945-1953) the main concern of national security in the US, as well as other allied states (to varying degrees) (Kaspersen, 2008:118). Once the discourse regarding the USSR became framed in terms such as Ronald Reagan's 'Evil Empire', Churchill's 'Iron Curtain', and more generally as the USSR (equated with communism and socialism) as being 'evil', 'tyrannical', 'authoritarian', etc., it was easier for the state to justify and legitimize certain actions that may otherwise have infringed on personal freedoms and liberal values - such as Senator McCarthy's hard crack down on communist sympathisers in the US, a period also known as the 'red scare' (Barnes, undated). It also legitimized the US's military budget as the biggest in the world by far, US-led wars and undemocratic interventionism everywhere in the world, and thus its place as the centre of its own Grossraum. Abroad as well as at home, anticommunism was at the center of the US post-WWII hegemonic project, embracing and appropriating this ideological 'war' as a core virtue and cornerstone of American identity. By joining NATO and accepting the Marshall aid, US allies in Europe - knowingly or not - adhered to this new Pax Americana and accepted its framing of the discourse, and the political implications that came along with them such as the unconditional appraisal of capitalism, liberal democracy, economic liberalism, national pluralism, free trade and the rule of law (Tunander, 1999:71).

For Denmark, being part of the American Grossraum in many ways provided it with the ability to develop more freely throughout the second half of the 20th, despite its requirement not to lean too far to the left, economically. Denmark didn't need to do much to gain its place within this constellation, since its geostrategic situation alone was enough for the US to consider it an important ally: right in the middle of the North Sea, controlling the passage to the Baltic Sea, as well as the huge portion of the North Atlantic and Arctic Denmark could rightfully claim and control through its ownership of Greenland and the Faroe Islands (Villaume, 1999:22). With the threats of outside enemies now significantly subdued thanks to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, and the manoeuvring capabilities provided through its guaranteed membership of NATO, Denmark could draw its focus and attention towards its own domestic issues, such as the development of its welfare state. In many ways, the US supported the creation of the Danish welfare state, because it understood

that working with the Danish Social Democratic Party - the biggest political party in Denmark through most of the Cold War - was the best way to feign off any potential communist movements within Denmark (Kaspersen, 2008:138). The Social Democrats themselves were strongly anti-communist and focused rather on class compromises that could funnel worker movement grievances within the liberal state structures through the establishment of an extensive welfare state. By not having to spend excessive amounts of state capital on developing its own military capabilities, since Denmark was now protected by the US and other NATO allies, said capital could instead be spent to fund its rather expensive welfare state.

Despite its abandonment of neutrality politics and its new adherence to the Western 'bloc', Denmark still kept to itself throughout the Cold War, engaging very little in foreign or high politics and adhering to what one Danish military analyst called Denmark's "mousehole strategy" (Michaelsen, 2019). This meant an overall foreign policy of international reticence and reserved isolationism, working primarily with other European countries to focus on European issues, and the development of European institutions such as those that led to the creation of the EU in 1992, as well as deepening Nordic cooperation overall. It was a policy of 'pragmatic survival', focusing on soft security topics, while agreeing not to stand in the way of the US's far more militaristic and draconian Cold War foreign policy, such as its war in Korea, Vietnam and illegal involvements in Latin America, South East Asia and the Middle East - all in the name of fighting the spread of communism and the USSR (Blum, 2003). This included Denmark letting the US establish its military presence permanently in Greenland at the Thule Air Base. Most of this approach changed once the Cold War ended, as I show in the next section.

## *5.2) 1991 - 2017: Active Internationalism & Humanitarian Interventionism*

As the Soviet Union was being dismantled and the Cold War was coming to an end, Georgi Arbatov, the Kremlin's chief 'Amerikanist' under Gorbachev, jokingly told US officials : "We are going to do something terrible to you: You will no longer have an enemy" (The Telegraph, 2010). Why exactly this quip has analytical value goes back to what I wrote earlier on the importance of the friend-enemy 'Us vs. Them' relationship between the US and the USSR / Communism in US domestic and foreign policy-making throughout the Cold War. What for four decades had served as the perfect 'Other' that would justify and legitimize the existence of the US-led Western Grossraum was dissipating, raising the question: what now? After all, NATO was born out of a perceived necessity to counter the Soviet threat - a threat which now no longer existed, defying the very existence of the organization. If the USSR was crucial in giving the US and Americans generally a sense of political identity, and US

foreign policy is dependent on this very national identity in order to sustain and justify itself, the disappearing of the 'evil Other' opened a whole new Pandora's box of problems for proponents of global US hegemony and liberal imperialism. After all, as I touched upon earlier, a Grossraum needs a similar, rivalling Grossraum in order to exist. Otherwise, with the removal of the external threat, there is no longer a reason for the satellite states to adhere to the security structure set up by the center state. Hence, a new doctrine had to emerge that could justify the maintenance of an alliance such as NATO and an American led global system. It took a little over a decade for a new doctrine to emerge, preceded by the 1990s - a period strongly characterized by a global confusion on what was going to happen next, and what the restructuring of the old Cold War international order might look like.

This confusion extended to Denmark as well, where a majority of policymakers - faced with the crumbling Eastern threat on the one side and an accelerating European integration on the other - decided that it had now "a unique window of opportunity" (Holm, 2002:21) to transform Danish foreign policy and give Denmark a new role in the world. So, from 1989 on, Danish foreign policy changed from what was perceived as a form of *reactive pragmatism* to an *active internationalism* grounded in a desire for common security and the spread of democracy, human rights and liberal values (Holm, 1997). This change in Danish foreign policy happened so quickly that a top official within the Pentagon compared it to "flipping a light switch" (Olesen, 2017:29). At the same time across the pond, Bill Clinton and his administration were developing their own foreign policy based on similar ideas, values and virtues as that of Denmark's - a policy now sometimes referred to as *humanitarian interventionism* (Kovalik, 2017). Within a few years, Denmark was already involved in helping the three Baltic countries rebuild and become further integrated in both European and transatlantic institutional structures, as well as taking part in the war in Kosovo (Wivel, 2015:418). These state actions fell well within the concept of Clinton's humanitarian interventionism, and thus a new relationship between the two nations started to develop.

The motivations behind the new Danish activist foreign policy has been widely debated (Olesen, 2017:30). While it is easy to assume that the policy is driven by the ideological convictions of desiring to spread Danish values abroad, it isn't as if Denmark didn't have the same values only a few years prior when it chose to be isolationist rather than activist (Holm, 1997). Was there a constant underlying desire from Denmark throughout the Cold War to behave more actively on the global stage, which it chose not to do because of the threat the USSR posed? It is possible that the removal of the main enemy opened the gate for smaller nations, still under the wing of the US, to come forward more confidently on the world stage. Simultaneously, the end of the Cold War established the prevailing notion that Western values and liberalism had *won* (having reached in Fukuyamist terms

the ‘end of history’) and hence reigned supreme above all other ideologies, justifying its international spreading (Branner, 2000). Yet the motivation can also be seen as a sort of combination of both strong liberal ideational convictions, along with a desire to cultivate a new, deeper, and stronger relationship to the US (Hansen, 2010). By mirroring US values, identity, and foreign policy - by *performing* a new Danish identity similar to that of the US as well as adopting its discourse - Denmark showed to its ally that it was worthy of its partnership as well as continued protection. This new approach to Danish foreign policy also came at a time of accelerating European integration combined with a rather prevalent and significant amount of Euroscepticism amongst the Danish population. In a democratic referendum, Danes voted in 1992 to reject the Maastricht Treaty and instead ratified the Edinburgh Agreement the following year allowing Denmark four exemptions from its terms - including the opt-out from EU defence policy (Wivel, 2015:418). So as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) continued to develop amongst the other EU member states, Denmark turned to the US instead with the hope of establishing strong bilateral connections in the area of security to make up for the lack of security parameters within the EU. So whereas Denmark lost some control and influence within the European sphere, it partially made up for in the benefits that came along with a tighter relation to the US: unconditional protection and an improved ‘access’ to (and thus influence) American policy-makers (Henriksen & Ringsmose, 2011:212).

Adopting such a new doctrine may not have been too complicated to justify and defend in the rather peaceful 1990s, but it was put to test at turn of the millennium once George W. Bush became the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the US, and with him the new US doctrine of *world-wide military intervention* (Kaspersen, 2008:155). While Clinton had in many ways focused primarily on the use of soft power (ibid.:158), attempting to maintain US hegemony and security through the use of institutional networks to promote free trade, liberalization and globalization (adhering to liberal and neoliberal IR traditions), Bush in many ways reverted back to a more traditional vision of security in military, realist terms (ibid.:177). This doctrine’s implementation was significantly aided after the terrorist attacks on 9/11 that killed almost 3.000 Americans on US soil - an event that kickstarted the infamous global ‘War on Terror’ and an era of perpetual, borderless war (ibid.:180). When Bush’s administration in 2001 sent thousands of US troops to Afghanistan, and subsequently Iraq in 2003 - without UN security council approval - he showed a willingness to detach the US from the priorly established belief that the entire world needs to follow strict principles of international law to maintain peace and order, to a new doctrine that permitted the US to act above said international standards. With a newfound enemy - ‘global terrorism’ - the US found a way to reinstate its Cold War Grossraum, as it once again self-appointed itself as the leader in the war against terror

(everywhere in the world, not just at home), in the same fashion that it had led the war against global communism (ibid.:178).

The liberal world order, it was claimed, was under serious threat from an outside, abstract enemy figure. In a revamped 'kill-or-be-killed' framework, it became an imperative to take any action necessary to fight and exterminate this enemy, wherever in the world it may be. Still, extraordinary actions require extraordinary justifications. American families generally don't want to send their sons and daughters to die in foreign wars, unless there's a very good reason for it - and so it goes for NATO allies, who under Article 5 (9/11 was by many considered to be a foreign attack against the US), were forced to consider the possibilities of getting involved militarily as well (ibid.:184). Hence a new discourse was also needed to legitimize the use of force majeure unapproved by international law, while also rallying allies in the fight against terrorism.

In his September 20<sup>th</sup> 2001 address to the American public following 9/11 (generally considered a key speech in sparking global interest for the invasion of Afghanistan) referring to Al Qaeda (the accused architects of the terror attacks on the twin towers), Bush claimed: "They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. *They hate our freedoms*: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other." (Washington Post, 2001; emphasis added) - this 'they', referring to a very unspecified "every terrorist group of global reach", hate 'our' freedoms, followed by many examples of core liberal values he claims all Americans fundamentally embrace. In the same address he states:

On September the 11th, *enemies of freedom* committed an act of war against our country [...] *freedom itself is under attack*. [...] I will not relent in waging this *struggle for freedom and security* for the American people. The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. *Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty*, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them. [...] *Freedom and fear are at war*. (ibid.; emphasis added)

The dichotomy is clear: freedom on the one side (the West), against tyranny on the other (usually assembling in gross miscategorizations terrorists, despots, Muslims, Arabs, the Middle East, or the 'Orient' alike). Following the principles of securitization theory, the focus on concepts such as threat, safety, and security are constantly repeated to legitimize the drastic actions of war, given that the offered solution - promoted here as the *only* solution - is the use of state violence: "These measures are essential. The *only way to defeat terrorism as a threat to our way of life* is to stop it, *eliminate it*

*and destroy it where it grows*” (ibid.; emphasis added). The internationalization of the conflict is the framework which made it possible to legitimize foreign action, and not just the curtailing of freedoms at home for the sake of national security:

Perhaps the NATO charter reflects best the attitude of the world: An attack on one is an attack on all. The *civilized world* is rallying to America's side. They understand that if this terror goes unpunished, *their own cities, their own citizens may be next*. Terror unanswered can not only bring down buildings, it can *threaten the stability of legitimate governments*. [...] This will be an age of liberty here and across the world. (ibid.; emphasis added)

This focus on terrorism as being global is crucial, and terrorism being the antithesis of freedom understood as liberal values, as well as being its greatest threat to the ‘Self’ (“*legitimate governments*”), and is the key factor that started the Bush doctrine of ‘world-wide military intervention’ - a doctrine which US allies, including Denmark, now had to take their own personal stances on. “Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: *Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.*” (ibid.; emphasis added) Bush claimed. For Denmark, which one would it be?

Although most NATO allies - as well as many non-NATO countries such as Russia and China - originally supported the US efforts against terrorism in Afghanistan, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was where the main split happened and certain lines were drawn from for example France and Germany. Denmark saw the election of a new Liberal/Conservative government in November 2001, led by Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen who took an explicit pro-US approach to Danish security policy. Already in 1998, Denmark supported the US strikes against Iraq and favoured the US upgrading the radar facilities in Thule, but from 2002 joined and became an active part of “the coalition of the willing”, joining the US by sending Danish military troops to both Afghanistan and Iraq as well as also being one the most vocal supporters of the US led efforts (Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2014:2). In terms of IR theories, the neorealist explanation for these actions would point to how the polarity of the international system pressured Denmark to cooperate closely with the US (Larsen, 2009:210). In a unipolar world, only close cooperation with the hegemon can give smaller states any degree of influence. Arguably, Denmark is ‘with the US’ not necessarily because it believes in the ‘Us vs. Them’ narrative laid forward by figures such as Bush, but also possibly because it understands that performing the same discourse is the best way to advance Denmark’s own personal security interests. A neoliberal institutionalist approach to it would point to Denmark’s constraints with the EU as a key factor in searching for alternative security and influence networks – i.e. the US (ibid.:212). Taking a poststructuralist perspective on the other hand tells us that social reality is

constituted by meaning structures that simultaneously produce and reproduce knowledge and identities. It asks: who is the Danish 'we' and how does it compare to the US or the EU? and more importantly, how does it affect Danish foreign policy?

In this case, the US and the EU can be seen as nodal points around which the Danish foreign policy discourse is framed. Around the 1990s and the early 2000s, there was little convergence between the Danish 'we' and the Europeanization movements that Danish citizens democratically showed an explicit distance towards, by refusing to ratify important treaties with the EU and requiring personal exemptions on matters such as security. The Liberal/Conservative government at the time showed great sympathies towards the US, as Anders Fogh Rasmussen himself was fundamentally a strong Americanist. The economic policies that he advocated for and introduced in government for example were heavily influenced by the neoliberal political wave that had swept the US since the 1980s, as he claimed himself, having supposedly experienced an "ideological awakening" during a visit to the United States in the early 1980s (Olsen, 2019:217). Feeling deep sympathies for the US after 9/11, combined with a scepticism towards the ability of the EU to provide the needed security for Denmark, Fogh repeatedly emphasized the importance of NATO and US as the foundation for Danish security (Rasmussen, 2002a) - a standpoint which later on granted him the position as secretary general of NATO. Danish foreign minister at the time, Per Stig Møller, defined this shared value-system between the US and Denmark:

Even if there is a lot that one can criticise the US for, and we do it when it is relevant, we share past and future and we have got *common goals for society consisting in freedom, democracy, equal rights and human rights*. If we [...] short circuit the Transatlantic Alliance, we weaken our possibilities to *protect* and further precisely our *joint ideas* in a world where too many *threaten* these. (Møller, 2007; emphasis added)

The discourse is very similar to that of Bush: same liberal values, same ideas, and same perceptions of threat. This alliance is one that Fogh doubled down on in 2002:

Denmark is among the smallest allies of the US. But it is also true that Denmark is among the biggest allies of the US. No other country has maintained unbroken relations with the US for longer than the Kingdom of Denmark. [...] Our *common values, shared destiny and visions* have been further fortified by the horrors of 11 September [which] was a defining moment calling for determined action in *defence of humanity and fundamental freedoms*. [...] These relations are at the very core of Danish foreign policy. [...] *The danger is far from over* and

the international community must not waiver now [...] Far more unites us than separates us [...] Thus, Denmark and the United States *share deep-rooted cultural and historic bonds*. (emphasis added; Rasmussen, 2002a)

Møller specified the neorealist vision that the US, being the global hegemon, is where Denmark should put its focus when it comes to security: “The US is the dominant player on the world stage. You may like it or not, but that is a fact. Therefore, a good relationship with the US increases the possibilities of Danish influence” (Møller, 2007) - the influence which he believed was needed to further Denmark’s “offensive Danish foreign policy” (ibid.). Rearticulating Danish foreign policy as being not simply ‘active’ but ‘offensive’ took it from the 1990s playbook of attempting to influence global politics not only through official institutionalized channels, such as the UN or EU, but rather by any means that can be allowed by the US’s own relatively ‘lawless’ interventionist foreign policy (Kaspersen, 2008:159). Fogh defended this new interventionist Danish foreign policy, which wasn’t always very popular domestically by stating:

Behind the domestic criticism of the government [...] one detects an unspoken wish to return to the poor adaptation policy where Denmark keeps a low profile, and where we tried, with all means, to slip past confrontations and events that could give problems. But the world is not like that anymore. Particularly not past September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. (Rasmussen, 2002b)

The world was now clearly *securitized*, and in these terms, going back to the old ‘mousehole’, reserved isolationist doctrine could be discredited as foolish, naïve, or even dangerous for the survival of the nation - the ‘Self’. Only full military support to the US was claimed as the way to guarantee national security as well as promoting Danish values abroad, now framed in the almost imperative terms of liberal responsibility - a ‘mission civilisatrice’ the small country was now deeply involved in. This endeavour of adopting an offensive foreign policy could only be achieved by articulating a strong Atlantic identity (Larsen, 2009:219-220), the same way that the UK had done for a very long time (a now ex-EU country that also used to often display a strong Euroscepticism and often demanded exemptions, peaking in 2016 with the Brexit vote). This ‘in between’ nature of Danish foreign policy between the US and the EU was reasoned by foreign minister Møller:

We live in an unpredictable world [but] we obtain the most when the EU and the US pull together. The EU can do something with ‘soft’ power which the US cannot do as well as us. And the US can do something with ‘hard’ power which the EU cannot. Together, we can do a lot. (Møller, 2007)



The EU, it was claimed, had its limitations which didn't fully meet the needs of the Danish state - and despite sharing similar values with the EU, it was simply not seen as the best vessel for the promotion of Danish interests abroad. It also didn't reflect the ambitions of the Liberal/Conservative Danish government to play a more active role in world affairs. As Larsen (2009:227) writes it: "It is not so much a downgrading of the EU post-2001 as an upgrading of the US."

This close relationship gifted Denmark a high level of access to US decision making, as the US supposedly considered Denmark to be more genuine than sycophantic or transactional. As a former diplomat in the Bush administration noted: "It is wrong to do something because it will be perceived as good in Washington. You should do it because it is the right thing to do. And that is what Fogh did" (quoted in Henriksen & Ringsmose, 2012:161). A former chief in the American State Department explained: "Denmark did not push very hard for rewards – but for good reasons. Too much aggressiveness can backfire" (ibid.), - quite paradoxically, this rather passive approach seemed to have been more effective in gaining US trust and influence than had it acted pushier and been more demanding. The main idea was that reputation ('doing the right thing for the right reasons'), above all, would guarantee access - not trying to strongarm the globe's biggest superpower. The shared values were, the US believed, sincere and truthful, making Denmark a respected and important US ally - a stature rewarded with 8 bilateral meetings between Fogh and Bush between 2002 and 2008 (ibid.:163). This was more than most other more US-sceptic European leaders at the time; nations which Donald Rumsfeld somewhat patronisingly demoted to the being part of the 'old Europe' (ibid.:162). Even more so, according to a central source at the White House, Fogh (very untypically) could at any moment get in touch with President Bush over the phone if he needed to discuss something with him. Along the same lines, the Danish ambassador was never required to make any formal arrangements for coming to the White House to discuss a matter with top American officials (ibid.:164).

Discourse analysis as I detailed earlier vastly emphasises the consequences of discourse more than the cause. Like Olesen (2017:30) claimed, the motivations behind the new Danish activist foreign policy have been widely debated – but the consequences had become rather clear. No matter whether the discourse of the Fogh government represented genuine intentions or not (as Washington seemed to believe it did), the effect of it was well aligned with the aims of the government at the time: guaranteed security, and a closer access to the White House. When Denmark found itself in the midst of what has been perceived as "the most significant crisis for Danish foreign policy since 1945" (Larsen, 2009:221) – the Cartoon Crisis of 2006 – the US was right by Denmark's side supporting it

in stabilizing the situation. A great help, foreign minister Per Stig Møller (2006) claimed, and one that validated Denmark's new security doctrine.

Despite having suffered the most fatalities per capita of any Western nation in Afghanistan (Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2014:2), this 'special relationship' guided by the new Danish foreign policy doctrine continued rather untroubled for years after the Bush and Fogh administrations, namely during the eight years of the Obama administration in the US and the Lars Løkke Rasmussen (Center Right/Conservative) and Helle Thorning-Schmidt (Center-left/Social Democratic) administrations in Denmark. In fact, it was Obama, and not Bush, who first recommended Anders Fogh Rasmussen for the post of NATO secretary general – a demonstration of a rather bipartisan, continued appreciation for Denmark across the Bush and Obama administrations (Henriksen & Ringsmose, 2012:172). This is despite the fact that Obama ran a presidential campaign harshly criticizing Bush's involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, as he promised to bring US troops home from both wars. Foreign policy under Obama, despite maintaining many of the same militarist and American exceptionalist principles, took a turn away from sending 'boots on the ground', to a more diversified style of warfare focusing rather on war-by-proxy and hybrid warfare (Krieg, 2016:99). Denmark, true to its doctrine, mirrored these policies without much questioning. When President Obama declared that Qaddafi in Libya had lost all governing legitimacy in February 2011, the same line was adopted in Copenhagen (Statsministeriet, 2011a). When he questioned the notion of a no-fly zone, so did Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen (Statsministeriet, 2011b). Once Obama stated on March 17th that he wanted to go beyond a no-fly zone, the Danish government ratified the same policy in Denmark (Andresen, 2011). On March 29th, when the US suggested that Qaddafi might be allowed to go into exile, the idea was immediately supported by the Danish government (Statsministeriet, 2011c). Once again wanting to show its unwavering support to the US, Danish military airplanes were operational in Italy only 57 hours after the UN Security Council had authorized the implementation of a no-fly zone. By March 31, the Danish F-16s had dropped more bombs on Libya than any other nation except the US (Jakobsen & Møller, 2012:114).

Obama, contrary to the Bush years, attempted to *desecuritize* Islamism and Islamist actors more generally, a move which was met with ambivalence in Denmark as it also broke with the earlier Liberal/Conservative government's 'conflict over values' that guided the new Danish activist foreign policy (Boserup, 2012:85). Obama's willingness to work with Islamic groups often described as 'moderate rebels' in Libya or Syria as on-the-ground actors who could be used for so-called democracy promotion was also a new approach which the Danish government ended up following, despite the fact that the Danish Cartoon crisis that had unfolded a few years earlier had left some bad

marks on many Danes' views on Islamic fundamentalists, seeing them as antithetical to the Danish values of democracy and free speech (ibid.:89). Nonetheless the policy shift proceeded rather smoothly, as its proclaimed aim was still the liberation of oppressed people abroad. By that time, the long and costly Iraq and Afghanistan wars were also weighing down on Denmark as increasingly costly and unpopular, so the US's new interventionist approach under Obama of implementing sanctions, short-term targeted strikes and utilizing domestic fighters instead of NATO soldiers in conflict countries was greatly appreciated by the Liberal-Left Thorning-Schmidt government (ibid.:119). Referring to the war in Libya, Danish Minister of Defence Hækkerup asserted that it was "good value for money" (Hækkerup, 2012), and thus became a great example for the country to show that it can continue to be engaged actively around the world without draining the state finances dry. Hækkerup declared that he was ready to commit Danish forces to similar wars in the future (ibid.), and as the Ministers of Defence, Development and Foreign Affairs also said: "Whether we should engage ourselves [internationally] is not the question, it is where and how" (Søvndal et al, 2012). In a 2012 paper for the Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook, Peter Viggo Jakobsen and Karsten Jakob Møller pondered on the future of Denmark's new security policy:

This begs the question whether a Danish government will say no to a future request from the UN, NATO or a US-led coalition for ground forces when (not if) the need arises. If the other characteristics of the Danish Way of War apply, such a request can be likened to a *mafia-style offer* that any Danish government will find it next to impossible to refuse. On their journey to Mars, Danish decision-makers have become accustomed to red carpet treatment in the White House and praise in NATO. Denmark's ability to 'make a difference' with its armed forces has become a source of national pride and has generated expectations at home and abroad that Denmark will 'do its part' when the United Nations, NATO and its major allies call upon it to do so. (emphasis added; Jakobsen & Møller, 2012:121)

Back in 2008, Lars Bo Kaspersen (2008:214) voiced similar concerns about the future of liberalism as the main state ideology in Denmark and the US, pointing out that like all hegemonic discourses, even when institutionalised, are nonetheless inherently contingent and susceptible to new counterhegemonic discourses. Should either state develop and adopt a discourse, materialised in ideology, that breaks with the prior focus on liberal values and human rights, how could that affect their ability to act internationally if they no longer practice what they preach? Or was appealing to human rights and liberal values simply an act of virtue signalling – a red herring meant to distract from the ever-present realist drive for survival and power, as well as to maintain and expand the

American Grossraum by giving imperialism a human face? Both the remarks of Kaspersen and Jakobsen & Møller were relevant for what was to become the next era in Denmark-US relations.

### *5.3) 2017 – 2020: Unreliable Allies & The New Cold War*

Indeed, where their warnings become interesting, are how they relate to the election of Donald J. Trump as President of the US in 2016 - an event that forced Danish policy makers to have to ask new uncomfortable yet important questions: how far is Denmark willing to go to maintain its special relationship to the US? To what extent can Denmark claim to share the same values as the US, and is it regardless of who is in power and what said leader requires from it? Once Trump became president, and even before all throughout his electoral campaign, his message to the US's NATO allies (including Denmark) was clear: you aren't paying enough in military defence, and if you want to stay in NATO and want US protection, you have to start paying more (Olesen, 2017:31-32). In 2016, Denmark's military spending was roughly 1.2% of its GDP, well under the 2% required by NATO, and even further from the 3.6% the US itself was spending (ibid.). The reputation that Denmark had worked hard to upkeep in Washington since the 1990s was suddenly worthless to a new administration that wouldn't guarantee its security unless it significantly increased its military spending. Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen thus agreed in 2016 to increase Denmark's military spending despite popular disapproval (TV2, 2016). Trump was clear in his message that NATO allies needed the US more than the US needed them, and that NATO was in fact a financial burden to the US if the members didn't start contributing more - and should they not do so, maybe he might leave the organization altogether (Barnes & Cooper, 2019).

As Trump at multiple instances throughout his tenure as president showed an unwillingness to follow legal procedures and denigrated the rule of law, it made it more difficult for Danish policy makers to argue that Denmark shared his values. This was not helped by the fact that Donald Trump often seemed to show more praise for authoritarian or semi-authoritarian illiberal world leaders such as Vladimir Putin in Russia and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil – stances the Danish government couldn't get itself to mirror in good conscience (Olesen, 2017:28). Trump in many ways broke with the proclaimed values, policies as well as the rhetorical style of previous US leaders, by for example openly denying the reality of climate change, arguing against free trade in the favour of protectionism, looking down on democratic principles and human rights, and more (ibid.:33). So not only had Denmark's access and reputation in DC strongly been diminished, it would be highly complicated and problematic to rebuild in the same fashion, given the discrepancies that arose with the clash in projected values and identities between the two nations.

Donald Trump, as compared to Clinton, Bush and Obama, did not start any new wars in his four years as president which could have put Denmark in the conundrum which Peter Viggo Jakobsen and Karsten Jakob Møller deliberated on earlier. He did however severe the tensions between the US and Iran to a dangerously new high, peaked by his withdrawal of the US from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - also known as the Iran Deal, in 2018 (Landler, 2018). Donald Trump and his administration at multiple occasions threatened to attack Iran (McCarthy & Pengelly, 2020), which could have led the US as well as Denmark into a new costly war should he have followed through at any point. The perspective of the two Danish governments under Trump was not that of Iran as being a concern to Denmark's national security, in the same way that Trump's administration claimed it was. Denmark often condemned Iran's human rights violations, but still believed that the JCPOA achieved under the Obama administration was the best way to normalize relations and maintain peace with Iran. This belief commonly shared by most NATO allies wasn't in Washington DC (Barrett, 2018).

Trump never managed to start a war with Iran - would he have done so, it would have been a different question whether many NATO allies, including Denmark, would have joined forces with the US. "If the other characteristics of the Danish Way of War apply, such a request can be likened to a mafia style offer that any Danish government will find it next to impossible to refuse" Jakobsen and Møller (2012:121) wrote, and it could have been that Denmark would have done so out of sheer resignation to its post-Cold War security strategy. Arguably, going against and breaking with the doctrine could have been an option, given that Denmark's own self-interests weren't being met by a Trump administration that wouldn't even guarantee its security. This could have put Denmark into a hypothetical 'coalition of the unwilling', alongside other NATO allies who'd view the war with great scepticism - possibly greater EU powers such as Germany or France who just like Denmark have voiced their concerns with US leadership under Trump as an unreliable security partner (Sheth & Reuters, 2017; Lemon, 2018).

Many global factors have played in over the last couple of years that have been reshaping the international structure of power, such as Russia and China's emergence as new, potent global superpowers capable of challenging America's post-Cold War unipolar global hegemony. Indeed, China became under the Trump administration categorized as the biggest threat to US interests and security (Cohen, 2020), leading to the launch of what became known as the US-China 'trade war' and a rapid souring of their bilateral relations. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen despite it all claims to remain committed to the US under Trump, emphasizing like her predecessors the

importance of liberal democratic values as what connects the US and Denmark together, although this time merging Denmark *into* 'Europe', as compared to Denmark *in between* Europe and the US:

In my opinion, the United States is the most important player on the global stage. And no matter what the differences, the European-American alliance is the most important in the world [...] We are the alliance that fights for freedom, democracy and fundamental human rights. [...] The alliance between free democracies is the whole basis of our freedom (Politiken, 2020b).

The discourse and policies espoused by Trump have led the world into a 'new Cold War' many experts and researchers on the subject have claimed (see Cohen, 2018; Davis & Wei, 2020; Zhao, 2019; Westad, 2019; Woodward, 2017). The characteristics between the old and new Cold War are vastly similar: the constant looming threat of global war, the bipolarization of power across clear cultural and geographical lines with global superpowers at the centre, competition over the allegiance (loyalty) of other nations, and the active support of one's enemy's enemies around the world. Donald Trump's 'America First' discourse which guided his political positions throughout his four years as president was clear in its message that there is no room for competitors to the US's global hegemony. To maintain said hegemony, the reasserted allegiance of allies, such as Denmark, is vital - and in Trump's new Cold War, the best and only way to recommit and show one's loyalty to the US is to increase one's national military spending and become more 'tough' politically, actively and rhetorically on China and Russia,

During the 'first' Cold War, the Arctic was the region where Denmark could show its support to the US's war against the USSR, primarily through Greenland, and so it is turning into once again today as Trump's confrontational discourse is slowly 'spilling over' into the High North (Pincus, 2020; Eriksen Søreide, 2020). The next part goes into the complicated history of the Arctic since WWII but examines the implications of the Arctic region's rapidly shifting geopolitical importance based on the priorly established history and analysis of US - Denmark relations. In particular, it assesses the politics of Donald Trump's administration towards the Arctic, and to what extent it relates to or clashes with those of the Danish government. It takes as foundation the gained understanding in Danish foreign policy and its post-Cold War security doctrine, and analyses whether Denmark has been able to utilize its (albeit dwindling) privileged access to US policy making to affect its Arctic policy in line with Denmark's, or whether it has simply resorted to adopting the policy positions of the Trump administration.

## 6. Denmark - US Relations: The Arctic Conundrum

### 6.1) *The Arctic as a Cold War Military Theatre*

There is not a lot to say about the Arctic as a globally important region before WWII, which is why WWII is being taken as the analytical starting point in this thesis. Simultaneously, as the prior sections on Denmark – US relations touched upon, there were virtually no bilateral relations between the two states before the war, hence very little to analyse and with very little relevance to this research. The Arctic was back then, in general terms, a ‘polar desert’ explorers ventured to for fame and glory, as well as for limited scientific research (Keskitalo, 2004:28). Nonetheless, the “scramble for the globe” (Riffenburg, 1993) that extended to the Arctic during the 18th and early 19th century “contributed significantly to the development of a global perception leading to the utilization of the Arctic as a strategic frontier after WWII” (Fogelson, 1992:ix). As the world was being mapped, and nation-state lines were being drawn, it became clear that the Arctic was a point of close contact between multiple countries. As Henrikson pointed out:

The most surprising geopolitical idea to emerge from the Second World War was the notion that the region surrounding the North Pole, rather than being a trackless vacancy removed from the principal courses of world history, was the potential core of a future intercontinental community: a global ‘Arctic Mediterranean’”. (Henrikson, 1992:107)

By presenting the Arctic ocean as a sort of Northern Mediterranean sea, the discourse changed in such a way that the Arctic became perceived as something central rather than remote - the ancient Greek and Latin etymology of the word Mediterranean literally referring to a sea ‘in the middle of the land’. Thus as the security situation changed during and after WWII, it was the global security situation at the time that paved the way for the actors dealing with high security matters (such as the state and the military) to essentially lead the Arctic region-building process surrounded around imaginaries of the Arctic as a *terra nullius* - a Wild North in a sense, void of any concrete institutional order and falling well into the visions of realist theorists who perceive the world as irredeemably anarchic, creating a responsibility for states to defend themselves at all costs from other states acting in their own self-interest (Keskitalo, 2004:34). During the Cold War, this was of course the mutual rivalry between the US and the USSR, whose paranoid realism led them to actively militarise the Arctic. The Arctic was after all the shortest distance between Washington and Moscow, and with rapidly developing long range missile systems, the Arctic quickly became an area of concern for both sides (ibid.:35). Throughout the Cold War, but especially at its height in the first two decades following WWII, many big-budget Hollywood movies were being made that reinforced this

imaginary of the Arctic as a geopolitical chessboard capable of starting a nuclear Armageddon. These were movies such as *Arctic Flight* (1952), *Fail-Safe* (1965), *The Bedford Incident* (1965), *Ice Station Zebra* (1968) and *World War III* (1982). Popular culture, especially during the Cold War, played a crucial role in maintaining the Cold War discourse alive and well (Steinberg et al., 2015:162).

Based on this vision of the Arctic as a potential conflict zone, the US decided to invade the Danish territory of Greenland in 1941 right when it entered WWII (Doel et al., 2016:28). The US understood the geostrategic importance of Greenland in the Arctic, and as mainland Denmark had been invaded by Nazi Germany in 1940, the US decided it was best for them to occupy Greenland than to let it fall in the hands of the Germans. While the US did invade Greenland, it agreed with Denmark to leave it as a sovereign Danish territory, in exchange for them being allowed to build military bases on the island - a deal which Denmark accepted. By 1944, 5.795 Americans were stationed on Greenland, or about 25% of its entire population. They built military bases, landing strips and scientific research stations for which they deliberately educated 7.000 new meteorologists. By the end of the war, the US Army Weather Service had installed 14 new weather stations, on top of the prior 13 Danish stations they were also now commanding (ibid.:76). In a *Time Magazine* article from 1947, a Pentagon official described Greenland as being the “the world’s largest stationary aircraft carrier” (Time Magazine, 1947), of which they now had almost total control. Once defined in these terms, it is not hard to understand why the US was very reluctant to leave the island after the war ended. As a matter of fact, they even offered to buy Greenland from Denmark in 1946 for the sum of \$100 million, yet to their great disappointment the Danish foreign minister at the time, Gustav Rasmussen, blankly refused the offer (Petersen, 1998; 2011). Instead, he asked the US to leave the island and give its control back to Denmark. The overarching mentality at the time in Denmark was that having had the strong displeasure of experiencing first-hand the disadvantages of being a small state during the war, as they had so effortlessly been invaded by the Germans, Danes were not thrilled about having to experience yet more occupation from another powerful nation.

One of the problems though, was that Denmark didn’t have close to enough manpower to command the many new weather and military stations on Greenland, so the US decided to continue operating them themselves despite the wishes from the Danish government for them to leave the island (Doel et al., 2016:79-80). But as Denmark and the US both founded and entered the same military alliance in 1949 (NATO), it became easier to establish a bilateral security partnership between the two nations. So in 1951, a deal was struck that gave the US the right to continue its military and scientific activities on Greenland within certain restricted areas decided by Copenhagen. Amongst other, the US gained full control over the Thule air base, which at the time was the biggest US military airport



outside of the US (ibid.:91). For Denmark, Greenland became its most important bargaining chip to convey influence and buy its way into NATO. Thus, it was crucial for Denmark to maintain its sovereignty over the island given that it otherwise had very little to offer to the alliance (Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2014:3). Yet the situation wasn't as clear-cut, given that even within the alliance, Denmark remained a small nation that attempted to establish itself as an equal to a very Cold War-maniac US, whose past allegiance to the Monroe Doctrine hadn't completely died out: Greenland is, after all, on the American continent. Hence, while the Danish government thought that the US was following the guidelines agreed upon in 1951, it later found out that it wasn't. The Americans had started in 1959 the construction of 'Camp Century' without Danish permission, and without letting them know either. Although they had previously officially asked for the rights to build the camp, the Danish government had refused in fear of angering the Soviet Union. Yet the US went along with the project, nonetheless. Once the Danish foreign minister found out as he was told by the US ambassador during an informal cocktail party, him and the rest of the Danish government came to the defeated realization that there was nothing they could do about it - the US was too powerful (Doel et al, 2016:202).

Powerless, and having lost once again the sovereignty of the island to the US, the Danish government tried to hide it from the Danish population through a state-applied censorship (ibid.:207-9). Unfortunately for them, the story of Camp Century did appear in the newspaper *The Sunday Star* (Bartlett, 1959), which forced the government to try their luck at damage control instead by downplaying the severity of the situation. It didn't help that the Americans had also lied about the purpose of Camp Century, originally claiming that it was for weather measurements only, while it was in fact the starting point for what was called 'Project Iceworm' – a US military initiative intending to plant 600 atomic bombs along a 4.000 km long tunnel system 10 meters under the Greenlandic ice. The complex was supposed to cover a total of 135.000 km<sup>2</sup> and requiring 11.000 people to manoeuvre (Doel et al, 2016:196-7). Although the full scope of Project Iceworm didn't come out until 1997, the Danish prime minister at the time was aware that there were possible atomic related activities going on in Greenland despite his official disapprobation. Greenland gradually became less relevant for the US by the end of the 1960s, with Camp Century closing entirely in 1967, and the Thule base decreasing to a personnel of only 1.189 men in 1968 (ibid.:252). But by that time, Denmark's foreign policy had already adapted to the circumstances that had unfolded on Greenland, and had accepted its place as a more passive NATO member that would for the most part allow the US to do as it wishes within the alliance, as long as it meant the continued, guaranteed security from the US. As I touched upon in the earlier sections on US-Denmark relations during the Cold War, Denmark utilized this protection to focus primarily on domestic matters, such as the development of

its welfare state, and decided to leave most matters that had to do with high security and Cold War power competition games to the 'big boys'. Such a resignation quite well exemplifies the attributes of the Danish Cold War 'mousehole strategy' spreading to the Arctic.

But as the Cold War thawed, and the Arctic became less of a military theatre, it was possible for Denmark to regain a gradually stronger control over Greenland. Denmark had been unable to affect the Cold War discourse or direction in any significant way and had for the longest time resigned itself to accepting the Arctic imaginary of the global Arctic superpowers - namely the US and the USSR. Greenland was Denmark's entry ticket into NATO, but it had failed at establishing networks of political influence in Arctic decision making throughout the Cold War. And once the Arctic became less relevant in global politics, while Denmark did regain sovereignty over Greenland, its ability to influence Washington in any way had diminished even further. As East/West relations ameliorated, it opened the gate for many new non-state actors to influence the Arctic discourse in their favour. Anti-Nuclear environmental activists promoting the *nature reserve* imaginary and pan-national Indigenous self-determination movements promoting the imaginary of *transcending statehood* were amongst the most vocal promoters of a new Arctic discourse of cooperation over conflict (Keskitalo, 2004:2, 37).

Shaping these new discourses relied heavily on historicity, such as the Indigenous people's claims to their native lands, or the romanticism of early Arctic exploration tales as an untouched wilderness to be preserved. While the former movement very much took place within the Arctic, the later was mainly advocated from outside actors. Some have coined the events that led to the turn in Arctic discourse that emerged in the 1980s an 'Arctic Boom' - a pan-imaginary movement which continued well into the 1990s (Heininen, 1992). The granting of home rule status to Greenland from Denmark in 1979 was a clear sign of the changes that were occurring in the Arctic, once a space had opened for non-state actors to have a say (Steinberg et al, 2015:69). The minor state-led *desecuritization* of the Arctic that happened starting in the late 1960s opened a small window of opportunity for a further desecuritization pioneered by new actors that were priorly disempowered and thus unable to access the articulation and construction of the Arctic discourse. This new sentiment of Arctic peace over Arctic conflict was also an essential part of Gorbachev's *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* politics, and his desired rapprochement of the East and West. It culminated in 1987 when Gorbachev declared in his Murmansk speech

Let the North of the globe, the Arctic, become a zone of peace. Let the North Pole be a pole of peace. We suggest that all interested states start talks on the limitation and scaling down of

military activity in the North as a whole, in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. (Gorbachev, 1987)

This was the beginning of a new era for all Arctic states, including Denmark and the US.

## 6.2) *From the 'Arctic Boom' to the 'Arctic Turn'*

As the Cold War officially ended in 1991, the new currents in Arctic cooperation only amplified further. As Young and Chekasov noted in 1992: “the politico-strategic issues associated with the militarization of the Arctic should be passed over at this stage in favour of efforts to cooperate in areas like scientific research and environmental protection” (Young & Chekasov, 1992:22). It was crucial to change the perception, the imaginary of the Arctic in the early years of the post-Cold War era, from a region where nations meet rather than an area where nations collide, for the many new transnational cooperation projects to be fruitful - but also as a region where new conceptions of security needed to be addressed in different ways. Indeed, concepts such as *human security*, referring to the security of people and communities, over the idea of national or military security started to gain prominence in the Arctic during those early years (Steinberg et al., 2015:162). Human, environmental and nuclear security, as contrasted to national/state security, required different approaches such as an increase in multilateral cooperation between old Cold War rivals. It was thus also decided in order to tackle these issues that new institutions were needed to gather nation states and set agendas to combat what became framed as common issues to all the Arctic states.

As noted earlier, it was primarily once the Arctic became institutionalized that it was possible to approach it and discuss it as an actual *region*, similar to nation-states and other regions in the world. Until the Arctic 8 got together and agreed to what the Arctic actually ‘is’, it was only possible to deal with the Arctic in terms of competing imaginaries. This is what the formation of the Arctic Council in 1996 set to achieve, as it introduced the new imaginary of a ‘solved’, or ‘normal’ Arctic that can be governed by the same set of international laws as any other region (Steinberg et al., 2015:6). This relates to the IR theory of intergovernmentalism, which perceives that states can in fact adhere to liberal institutional agreements as long as they bring about positive outcomes for all parties involved. Once the Arctic became desecuritized, it was possible to establish an institution such as the Arctic Council (amongst others, albeit it being the most important one) that only deals with matters of low politics in the Arctic - matters innocent enough in the post-Cold War era to not be perceived as infringing on the national interests of any of the Arctic 8 states, thus making unanimous consensus possible. Still, institutionalizing a discourse doesn’t mean that it automatically becomes a social

imaginary free from contingency, but it does provide a strong degree of legitimacy that makes it harder to be challenged. Yet nonetheless, old conceptions do not die out easily, especially when the common memory of the Arctic as a zone of conflict is still very much ingrained in the minds of those who lived through the Cold War and absorbed the discourse at the time, repeatedly pronounced in political discourses and popular culture.

The Arctic still enjoyed a new climate of peace, and almost became a forgotten region as the attention of many world leaders turned to other global conflicts. Denmark adopted in the 1990s (as I already detailed extensively earlier in this thesis) a new doctrine of international activism, approaching itself strongly to the US as its main security ally and following it as it got involved in multiple international conflicts such as in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libyan and Syrian wars. The global 'War on Terror' became the new focus of US foreign policy, a 'war' finding place mainly thousands of kilometres outside the Arctic, hence not dividing the Arctic nations once again along East/West lines. These were the times when Denmark really reasserted itself as one of the US's closest ally and enjoyed its rather privileged access to the White House (see Chap. 5.2). Yet the many self-determination movements of Arctic indigenous people didn't stop as the Cold War ended, and the Greenlandic Inuits' push for greater independence from Denmark became Copenhagen's main concern in the Arctic (while remaining a domestic issue for the most part) (Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2014:2).

It was well established that Greenland was during the Cold War Denmark's greatest bargaining chip in its alliance with the US, but as the Cold War ended and the Arctic was out of international focus, its importance as a major Danish security asset faded. Denmark had found new ways to get close to the US that didn't involve Greenland at all, which also made it easier for the Greenlandic people to strive for greater independence (Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018:59). As a consequence, Greenland was granted the status of a self-governing country within the Kingdom of Denmark in 2008, becoming in charge of all Greenlandic matters except for security and foreign policy, which would still be conducted from Copenhagen. The post-Cold War years were heavily influenced, as I have shown earlier, by the belief in liberal-democratic values. It was therefore counter to Denmark's self-image as a promoter and defender of individual liberties and democracy to maintain its grip on a people longing for freedom (Steinberg et. al, 2015:85). Loosening the rope with Greenland was also the main way Denmark saw that it could maintain some degree of influence on Greenland while avoiding a total separation between the two, by essentially remaining on Greenland's good side.

Denmark's vision as a global peace actor did nonetheless extend to the Arctic, and foreign policy remained its last grip over Greenland, thus the belief was that maintaining the Arctic as a zone of peace was the only way that it could avoid being completely 'pushed out' of Arctic decision making (Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2014:1). Should the Arctic return to its Cold War era tensions with an active US and Russian presence, combined with a far more assertive and independent Greenland, it was believed it could be the final straw that would end Denmark's role as an Arctic player altogether. As long as Denmark was involved in peace-keeping in the Arctic, handling low politics defence planning while supporting cooperation between the Arctic states, the Arctic could be one more region where Denmark could solidify its relationship to Washington, and avoid being caught in the middle of great power competitions (ibid.:4). Especially as the Afghanistan war was winding down in the late 2000s, Danish foreign policy thinking moved from activism to 'Arctic-vism' (ibid.), a position that became particularly clear in 2007 after a group of Russian explorers on a scientific mission in the Arctic ocean decided to plant a Russian flag at the geographic North Pole. The Russian accomplishment made the news worldwide, and the old perception of a *terra nullius* type 'scramble for the Arctic' remerged in full force in the media and political circles everywhere (Steinberg et al.:19). For the Arctic nations that for almost 20 years had tried to establish the Arctic as a 'normal' and 'solved' region of peace, guided by international law, this event was a diplomatic disaster - not because the planting of the flag had any official political connotation, but because its *image* had a potentially disastrous effect in challenging the 'status quo' Arctic discourse, portraying it instead as an 'abnormal' and 'unsolved' region (ibid.:33).

As I touched upon earlier, images matter especially in the Arctic because so many of the institutions and individuals who make policy for the region have very little experience with the Arctic, and thus often base their decisions on perceptions more than realities. Images like that of a flag planting are also easy to sensationalize in the media. The Arctic Council as an international soft power institution has no real policy-making authority and is by law not allowed to discuss matters of hard security. Its main purpose is to make sure that Arctic nations don't *have* to deal with military matters as long as they can agree and cooperate on other matters, such as the environment, climate change, indigenous rights, infrastructural development, economic development, etc. Once again, falling back to the IR theory of intergovernmentalism, we know that cooperation and integration will stall if the national interests of one or more countries would contravene those of others. A perception of the Russians racing to claim the North Pole as being rightfully theirs, directly puts Arctic nations in a position where they see themselves in competition against one another, falling back to the old Arctic conceptions of 'use it or lose it', as former Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper once said (quoted in McCormack, 2016). It breaks the status quo imaginary of a solved Arctic guided by international

law towards the *terra nullius* imaginary of a Wild North to be conquered by whomever gets there first.

Right as the events were unfolding, the Danish government at the time took it upon itself to remedy the situation and attempt to refute the *terra nullius* imaginary that was being shaped in the discourse surrounding the Russian flag planting. When one views the Arctic from this perspective, it becomes seen as a zone of likely conflict with strong negative ramifications for Denmark trying to maintain its place and sovereignty in the Arctic. Indeed, Denmark had a lot to lose from a remilitarized Arctic, and a lot to win from maintaining the post-Cold War Arctic status quo, and it hence decided to gather all of the Arctic coastal states (the Arctic 5: Denmark, Norway, Russia, Canada and the US) to a meeting on Greenland in 2008 with the aim of officially reaffirming that no ‘race’ or ‘scramble’ for the Arctic was taking place. This meeting culminated with the signing of the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration, ratified by the Arctic 5 and reaffirming the status quo imaginary as defined by the Arctic Council and common international law – in particular, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (ibid.:10). The US has always been strongly invested in the Arctic Council not becoming an official policy-making body, and never itself ratified the UNCLOS, so signing more declarations such as the Ilulissat Declaration was not something that was enthusiastically received in Washington (ibid.:11). Combined with the fact that the Arctic was around 2007-2008 ‘off the American radar’, it was likely that the US would choose to not even participate in the meeting (Henriksen & Ringmose, 2012:167). Getting the US to ratify the agreement which Denmark was pioneering was achieved greatly due to Denmark’s newly gained ability to access American policy-makers. Denmark used its close access and good personal relations with the Bush administration to convince them of the benefits of creating a consensus on international laws regarding the Arctic. Many diplomats believe that without this extremely close contact to people inside the US government, the declaration could not have been possible. One American indeed called Ilulissat an “achievement of Danish foreign policy”, while another diplomat reaffirmed that “Denmark was able to influence US policy on Greenland because of Denmark’s access’ (ibid.:167-8). Going along with US security policy for the last two decades was once again paying off.

Although the Ilulissat Declaration to some extent managed to calm the waters, the status quo perception of the Arctic had been tarnished. The Arctic as a security concern did re-emerge on the Danish political agenda around the final years of the 2000s, in what has sometimes been referred to as Denmark’s ‘Arctic Turn’. As Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen (2018:54) noted: “The difference between 2006 and 2014 illustrates that Denmark’s foreign, defence, and security policy underwent an *Arctic turn*, as Danish politicians, experts, media, and civil servants have directed their attention towards

Greenland and the High north.” (emphasis in original). Indeed, a 2003 foreign policy white paper that outlined Danish foreign policy priorities in the aftermath of 9/11 did not mention the Arctic once, and only mentioned Greenland in passing (Government of Denmark, 2003). By 2011, the Danish government had declared that “[e]ven though the working relationship of the Arctic Ocean’s coastal states is close, there will be a continuing need to enforce the Kingdom’s sovereignty by the armed forces through a visible presence in the region” (Government of Denmark et al., 2011:20). It continued by asserting that “[w]ithin the entire spectrum of tasks, the Kingdom attaches great importance to confidence building and cooperation with Arctic partner countries [...] to maintain the Arctic as a region characterised by cooperation and good neighbourliness” (ibid.:2011:18, 20–21). By April 2014, Martin Lidegaard, then the Danish minister of foreign affairs, highlighted the Arctic as one of his four foreign policy priorities during a speech to the Danish Foreign Policy Society. He argued that the high North was “increasingly an arena for global political and economic forces. [...] Denmark has played and must play a special role there” (Lidegaard, 2014). The general idea behind the Arctic turn was the belief that the status quo imaginary of the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration would not stand strongly enough in a changing Arctic, accentuated by the effects of climate change and an altering global power structure, and hence a more hands-on approach needed to be taken to maintain things as they had been pre-2007. In order to avoid friction, the new policy was based on accommodating other states’ interests in the region to a certain extent, including non-Arctic states or state-like entities such as the EU, China, Japan and South Korea (Government of Denmark et al., 2011:32, 35, 41, 49–55).

What this meant in practice, was a strengthening of Denmark’s influence over Greenland by increasing its presence on and near the island and operating as a unified actor (Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2018:62). Greenlandic independence was in fact not addressed in the strategy. Greenland had in the earlier years used Copenhagen’s disinterest in the Arctic to acquire a more significant influence over the Kingdom’s regional policy, but after the ‘Arctic turn’, this influence was transferred back to Copenhagen with its new international focus on the Arctic and new Arctic Strategy. Both the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence experienced an institutional shift in security policy thinking, becoming much more aware of the Arctic as a focal point for Danish defence policy (ibid.:63). It was a fine line to walk, because engaging more heavily in the Arctic could inadvertently send the wrong signal to other states that Denmark was revamping the Arctic militarily - a perception that went contrary to Denmark’s actual desire to maintain cooperativeness and peace in the Arctic. But the intention was clear: Denmark wanted to become an actor capable of shaping the thinking and discourse on Arctic matters.

Probably the second most significant political event which affected Arctic politics, happened thousands of kilometres away, when Russia annexed Crimea in March of 2014. This extreme violation of international law by the Russian government reignited tensions between the West and Russia, and the fears of these tensions spilling into the Arctic was high (ibid.:65). In the six years between the Ilulissat Declaration and the Ukraine crisis, the geopolitical climate in the Arctic was already shifting but at a rather slow and somewhat manageable pace. The fear was, especially in Copenhagen, that this tension could accelerate out of its control. As the US decided to actively participate in the Ukraine conflict, essentially helping setting up the coup that ousted then Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich (CNN Press Room, 2015), Denmark found itself in a situation where it both supported the US's and the West's actions against Russia, faithful to its post-Cold War security doctrine by following suit in imposing sanctions and expelling diplomats, while still simultaneously cooperating with Russia within the Arctic as if nothing had happened in Ukraine. These were, it was clear, two different entities requiring two different approaches - and while Russia became a potential threat and enemy on one front, it was crucial that it would remain a friend and ally on the other. As Rhabek-Clemmensen (2014:6) puts it:

*Copenhagen is consequently walking a tight- rope between deterrence and accommodation. Denmark wants to keep Russia within the well-functioning cooperative order in the Arctic and is willing to surrender short term political advantages to achieve that goal. However, Denmark is also well-aware of the need for effective deterrence of Russia. (emphasis added).*

In the early years of his presidency, Obama had neither paid much attention to Russia or the Arctic. During his 2012 re-election campaign facing his Republican opponent Mitt Romney in a televised presidential debate, Obama even went so far as to mock Romney for his perception of Russia as a threat, jokingly saying: "The 1980s, they're now calling to ask for their foreign policy back!" (quoted in Kessler, 2014). After 2014, the discourse coming from the White House had significantly changed to one that resembled the discourse of Cold War containment policy against the Soviets. Denmark, along with the US, partially supported the enlargement of NATO and the EU in Eastern Europe, including Ukraine, knowing very well that Russia was strongly against such developments ever happening so close to its own borders. Denmark also supported the ousting of Yanukovich and the instatement of the vehement anti-Russia, pro-West Petro Poroshenko as the new president of Ukraine and participated in Operation UNIFIER aimed at reforming Ukraine's military fighting pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine (Government of Canada, undated). Denmark's commitment to NATO was firm and strong, but so was its Arctic turn policy - and seeing the military build-up happening



on its Eastern borders as a threat to its national sovereignty, Russia began militarizing its Northern front as a reassertion of its Arctic sovereignty, in the same fashion Denmark was doing in Greenland (Hønneland, 2016:64). Yet the perception of both build-ups was very different in Western political and media circles: Denmark's actions were defensive, Russia's actions were offensive and aggressive. In line with securitization theory, the perception of Russia as a threat became ingrained in the Western discourse, prompting new conceptions of security that required new and revised policies to counter said 'threat'. This led to a shifting in Arctic imaginary, that only exacerbated further after the 2016 US presidential election.

### *6.3) America First, Greenland Second, Denmark Third*

As I mentioned earlier, for the greater part of the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations, the Arctic was pretty much off the radar in US foreign policy. The situation had been settled in a fashion that the US saw as favourable to its interests, embodied in an institution (the Arctic Council) that couldn't officially affect US policy and wasn't allowed to discuss matters of military security. The US had emerged as the 'winner' of the Cold War, and for the two decades to follow, it was virtually unchallenged by other nation states. The climate of low security in the post-Cold War era allowed for international institutional governance projects to emerge, that along the thinking of liberal and neoliberal IR theory, solved many of the diplomatic problems that the Cold War bipolarity had previously rendered impossible. Realism and neorealism took a step back in US Arctic policy, as the 'dog-eat-dog world' perception of the Cold War had ended with there only being one big dog left, and a stray of rather powerless, submissive puppies. The projection of US hegemonic power was now better accomplished through institutionalized structures within which they had the upper hand, such as NATO, the WB, the IMF, G7, OECD or the WTO (to name a few). The Arctic Council did not stand in the way of this new institutional order, especially given how the Arctic Council's core principle was to follow the guidelines of the UNCLOS - a treaty the US never ratified, although endorsed as customary law (Steinberg et. al., 2015:2).

Trump entered the White House in January of 2017, after having run a strongly worded presidential campaign denigrating multiple other nations, from Mexico and China, to NATO allies. By adopting the politics of 'America First' (one of his main campaign slogans), Trump expressed that there were indeed other actors, other countries out there, that are threats to American economic and political hegemony. This is not a discourse his predecessors were espousing, focusing rather on multilateral cooperation within institutionalized structures. Donald Trump refuted all that, openly claiming that other countries should not even try to stand in the way of US interests, and that no institution should

be allowed to tie the US down against its true potential and intentions (Pascal, 2019). His rhetoric was in fact, very reminiscent of Cold War realism: trust no one, contain other global powers, and prepare for war - but this time, China was his main target. Given his hard stance against China, Trump chose to surround himself with cabinet members who would share his concerns regarding the emerging economic giant across the Pacific. Although convincing other warhawk Republicans to ramp up tensions with China and Russia within his administration was a relatively easy task, convincing other NATO allies of the same wasn't (Kärnfelt, 2020).

As climate change is rapidly accelerating, new areas of international friction have started emerging in the high North linked to the many new economic opportunities that are starting to appear due to the disappearing sea ice - mainly the possibility for natural resource extraction in the Arctic ocean, as well as the emergence of naval commercial passage routes through the Northern Sea Route (NSR; North of Russia) and the Northwest Passage (NWP; Through Northern Canada and North of Alaska) (Steinberg et al., 2015:175). For a regular cargo ship to sail from Rotterdam to Japan through the usual Suez Canal, the total distance is around 17.700 km. Sailing via the NSR reduces the distance to around 12.200 km equating to a saving (depending upon service speed) of around ten days of travel. Ten less days of sailing saves a lot of time and money (fuel, salaries, etc) for an export-heavy country like China that trades a lot with Europe. For this reason China has over the last few years been cooperating intensely with Russia and providing a lot of investment capital to develop the needed infrastructure along the NSR to permit the safe passing of commercial vessels in what it has termed the 'Polar Silk Road' (Gao & Erokhin, 2020). This has established a special mutually beneficial relationship between Russia and China, the former needing investment capital to develop its Northernmost frontier in order to establish its sovereignty in the region, should the NSR become as commercially active as Singapore or the Suez Canal. China, seeing itself as a 'sub-Arctic country', needs the Russian infrastructure for commercial passage (ibid.). But establishing one's sovereignty over a territory, no matter where in the world, tends to come with an added military presence (just like Denmark on Greenland). It is thus this increased militarization of the Russian Arctic in cooperation with Trump's biggest perceived threat, China, that has been the main driver of Arctic resecuritization over the last four years.

Donald Trump is not known for being as diplomatic an orator as his predecessors. He rather tends to blurt out online or in person what he believes needs to be done or said, and out of these statements policy positions within his administration and in the Republican led Senate are influenced. Once Trump says something is important, it becomes the duty of his ministers to look into it, like it tends to be in all presidential administrations. So once Trump announced in 2018 that it would be a good

idea if the US could purchase Greenland from Denmark, the statement had to be taken seriously and the possibility investigated (Breum, 2019). It had been many years since the US had taken an interest in Greenland, but it wasn't the first time they had attempted to purchase it from Denmark. Last time as was priorly mentioned, was after the Second World War in the early years of the Cold War - hence it becomes almost impossible not to draw parallels between the US's intentions in the Arctic then and now. As the earlier chapter (section 5.1) talked about, Denmark suffered a pretty severe loss of sovereignty during WWII when it was invaded by Nazi Germany, with the US invading Greenland as a consequence and then having a hard time letting go of the island for the two following decades despite Denmark's wishes to regain full sovereignty over the island. Trump's offer was therefore, unsurprisingly, harshly received by Danish politicians and the Danish press.

Denmark's prime minister Mette Frederiksen called the offer "absurd" (Aagaard, 2019), stressing out that Greenland wasn't for sale, and above all it wasn't Denmark's to sell. After Frederiksen's comment, Trump responded by calling her "nasty" (ibid.) and in retaliation decided to cancel a trip to Denmark that had been planned for the fall. A last-minute cancellation of this sort is highly unusual for heads of state, especially for a nation like Denmark that had been used to special treatment and respect from the US over the last two decades. Many Danish politicians saw it as an open affront to Denmark and the Danish Queen, as for example Søren Espersen, foreign affairs rapporteur and vice chairman of Dansk Folkeparti (the Danish far right party) said: "We are out in the absolute absurd. He gets an invitation from the Queen, then he doesn't know whether he wants to come anyway, and now he cancels it at the 11th hour" (quoted in Berlingske, 2019). He continued "This is a big affront against the Queen and the royal family" while later comparing Trump to a "spoiled child" and his decision "childish" - all while he maintains that the US is still Denmark's closest ally. The Conservative party's spokesperson for Greenland, Rasmus Jarlov, called Trump's behaviour "insulting" (ibid.), while the spokesperson for the Red-Green Alliance party Pernille Skipper said that "Trump lives on another planet. Self-absorbed and disrespectful" (ibid.).

Trump's faux pas along with the rather harsh reception amongst Danish politicians opened up the discussion regarding Denmark's long-lasting alliance with the military superpower. Writing an article with the name "*The US's and Denmark's relationship has never before been so ice cold. And it has far-reaching consequences*", Berlingske's security policy correspondent Kristian Mouritzen (2019) suggests that "the time with an intimate and close security policy cooperation with the US is over [...] One has in Trump a 'friend', one simply cannot rely on, unless one's name is Kim Jong-Un or Vladimir Putin". In these remarks, Mouritzen clearly points to the schism in identity and political values that seem to be splitting the two nations apart, as Trump (he claims) would rather align with

other more like-minded authoritarian leaders than with liberal democracies like Denmark. “Trump doesn’t care about his allies, if they don’t stand at attention [...] The relationship of trust is gone. And no one dares to seriously discuss the foundational problems with the American president out of fear” (ibid.). Trump’s behaviour is what “wars in the old days were started from” (ibid.), he also warns.

Nonetheless, the seed had been planted, and even though Trump didn’t get to purchase Greenland, the idea of a stronger US influence over the island was now accepted as legitimate amongst US political circles; the Arctic was now officially ‘on the radar’ in Washington. But if the way to approach Arctic policy within Trump’s administration is to ramp up tensions and expand the new Cold War to the high North, this may once again cause friction between Denmark’s and the US’s alliance. Danish foreign minister Jeppe Kofod claimed after a meeting with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo: “For the Kingdom it is important, that the cooperation in the Arctic is based on low tension” (quoted in Politiken, 2020a). As minister of foreign affairs, Kofod plays a crucial role in cultivating Denmark’s relationship with the US, which is why he unlike many other Danish politicians has been rather reserved in his criticism of the Trump administration, focusing instead on what needs to be done to maintain a good relationship no matter what value schisms may exist. Yet to maintain the ‘special relationship’, simply accepting the US discourse has not been enough in the past, as performing and acting on the discourse have been the necessary actions that have demonstrated Denmark’s prowess to the US and thus its worthiness as a close ally. So the question is: is Copenhagen willing to take on a strong securitized, realist-fuelled Cold War-era discourse that is ‘tough on China’, even if it may jeopardize its national interests of peacekeeping in the Arctic?

Senior researcher and leader of the Center for Military Studies at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen Henrik Breintzenbauch develops on this: “The most important global agenda, the Americans have, is the heightened rhetoric regarding China. But the bilateral question in relation to Denmark, that is the question regarding the Arctic” (quoted in Valbjørn Stavnsbjerg, 2020). He continues: “The Danish concern is thus that Denmark no longer can keep itself out of the Arctic conflict with the Russian military build-up and the Chinese presence. These are the frames for the conversation both foreign ministers [Kofod and Pompeo] must have” (ibid.). Denmark has in recent years at least, done its best to come across as ‘tough on Russia’, says Rachel Ellehuus from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, also claiming that “Trump’s administration sees Denmark as relatively hard on China” (quoted in Svendsen, 2020b). Although Denmark has showcased its toughness on Russia in multiple ways, such as the ones priorly mentioned as well as being the country involved in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project that attempted the hardest to stop it or at least slow it down (ibid.), it has taken very few similar measures when it comes to China - a far

more important trade ally for Denmark than Russia. Nonetheless Denmark has adopted the US rhetoric when it comes to the liberation protests in Hong Kong and the alleged mass incarceration of Muslim Uyghurs in Western China. Both of these issues can easily be approached from the usual liberal standpoint, calling out abuses in human rights, individual freedoms and undemocratic representation. These are some of the areas where Denmark can showcase itself as hard on China, without having to compromise its commercial interests, but Ellehuus fears that it may end up implicating Denmark in the US and China's growing conflict in the South Chinese Sea (SCS), given how Denmark is a big maritime nation above all else (ibid.).

The SCS conflict is at the core of many of the current Arctic security concerns, given that the Arctic is an ocean as well and that both China and US have a growing interest in it. What has created tension in the SCS has been China's attempt to put it under its control, as researcher Yun Sun from the Stimson Institute points out: "China wants to keep the SCS closed, but wants to keep the Arctic open" (Sun, 2020). The US's military efforts in the SCS have been pursued with the aim of trying to avoid it becoming a closed passage controlled by a rivalling nation, and this conflict fuels the fear that China might attempt a similar feat in the Arctic ocean as well. Yun Sun claims that China has no intention of doing so, and that China wants freedom and access to the Arctic ocean above all, similar to what it enjoys in the Indian Sea for example (ibid.). Not being an Arctic coastal state, China doesn't have any similar legal grounds in the Arctic as it does in the SCS, and she claims China understands this very well, and is simply interested in the Arctic for fishing, research, commercial passage and infrastructural development (according to her, China doesn't even have the military capabilities to act in the Arctic). Trump's administration does not buy the line, as stated in Mike Pompeo's May 6th Arctic address in Rovaniemi, Finland: "China's pattern of aggressive behaviour elsewhere [...] should inform what we do and how it might treat the Arctic" (quoted in Johnson & Wroughton, 2019), mentioning also the US's other big Arctic rival, namely Russia: "These provocative actions are part of a pattern of aggressive Russian behaviour here in the Arctic. Russia is already leaving snow prints in the form of army boots. Russia formally announced its intent to increase its military presence in the region in 2014, when it reopened a Cold War Arctic military base" (ibid.). *Aggressive* and *provocative* are descriptive terms that are difficult to misinterpret, so is the reuse of the term 'Cold War', hence Pompeo's message is quite clear in showing the US's intent to combat the two nations in the circumpolar North.

This brings us back to Denmark and Greenland, because the US has since made clear that they will both be important allies in pushing back against Chinese and Russian presence in the Arctic (Breitenbauch, in Christensen, 2019). One of the ways that China has been expanding its influence

in the Arctic has been through massive infrastructural investments in Arctic nations - mainly in Russia but has also shown an interest in Greenland. So when China offered to build a new airport in Greenland, Denmark being pressured by Washington was swift to jump in, cancel the project, and offer to pay for the airport itself instead (Christensen, 2019). For many local Greenlanders, this overruling of Greenlandic domestic politics was seen as a gross misuse of power from the Danish government and an infringement on their home rule. For Greenlanders, it can become difficult to attract foreign investment, if it is known that the Pentagon can simply make a phone call to Copenhagen and get a project shut down (ibid.). This powerful US involvement in Greenlandic affairs shows that it once again perceives Greenland as it did during the Cold War: as the world's largest stationary aircraft carrier. A Chinese airport on this aircraft carrier located on the American continent is within this line of thinking simply impermissible. The move from Denmark to overrule Greenland's decision to accept Chinese investment well reflects the core attributes of Denmark's Arctic turn, as a government now willing to act in accordance to the security concerns of Copenhagen first, and in the interests of the Greenlandic people second. And as per Denmark's foreign policy doctrine of the last 30 years, it just so happens that Denmark's security concerns match those of the Pentagon and White House.

This conscious political choice still raises a lot of questions regarding the future of Denmark's relationship to Greenland. The concept that Greenland is and will be playing a major role in the future of US Arctic policy is nowadays well established in DC, and as long as Greenland remains under Danish control, all foreign policy matters regarding Greenland will have to go through Copenhagen. If Copenhagen then bows to the will of the US regarding Greenlandic affairs and starts imposing on Greenlanders policies that follow US interests first-and-foremost, it may very well accelerate Greenland's desire to become fully independent from Denmark altogether. Should this happen, Denmark will lose its only entry ticket to the Arctic, and with it its ability to be considered an important US ally as it turns its attention to the Arctic. On the other hand, refusing to go along with US requests on Greenland may also sever Denmark's special relationship with the US, who may then on their own attempt to influence Greenland towards independence. As we saw during the Cold War, the US deciding to act unilaterally on Greenland without Danish approval is something that it is very capable of doing, with very little Denmark can do against it. Denmark already experienced a 'blast from the past' as the US very recently reopened its consulate in Nuuk that had been closed since 1953 - a time at the peak of the Cold War when Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland had been severely weakened by the US (McGwin, 2020). Along with reopening the consulate, the US also gifted Greenland with a \$13.5 million investment to go towards education, trade and cultural cooperation (Svendsen, 2020a). But these aren't as crucial, notes Per Stig Møller, former Danish

foreign minister “What is problematic is not the 83 million crowns [\$13.5 million] to Greenland, it is the warlike rhetoric” (quoted in Skjoldager & Tamer, 2020). As he continues: “One doesn’t need to turn up for the rhetoric, if we mean it seriously, that the Arctic must be a low-tension area”, claiming that it is instead crucial that the government underlies the importance of the Ilulissat declaration, which was in fact reconfirmed in 2018 for its 10 year anniversary.

Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the Ilulissat Declaration was one of Denmark’s top diplomatic achievements in Arctic peacekeeping, achieved no less thanks to its close ties to the Bush administration. It had helped reaffirm the status quo imaginary right as competing imaginaries were taking over following the Russian flag planting, but it seems that even though the declaration was reconfirmed just three years ago, it is not exactly succeeding in readjusting the Arctic discourse towards a less confrontational tone. “There is a huge challenge for Denmark and for the Commonwealth, when superpowers raise the conflict level. We risk getting caught between Russia and the US, and we need them both” says Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen at the Center for Arctic Security Studies (quoted in Stryhn Kjeldtoft, 2020). He adds “It would be very advantageous, but also incredibly difficult if the Danish side can try to influence how the US makes its re-entry into the Arctic. The less aggressive it happens, and the less Greenland gets involved, the better” (ibid.). Yet the gaze of the leader of the world’s largest economy and military was already set on Greenland, and manoeuvring him away from it is what has been challenging for Copenhagen - especially considering how US actions towards Greenland now can be perceived, knowing what the underlying intentions may be. After the US Ambassador to Denmark wrote a chronicle voicing her support for further cooperation with Denmark and Greenland (Sands, 2020), Søren Espersen (foreign affairs rapporteur and vice-chairman of Dansk Folkeparti) sceptically noted "If Trump had not proposed to buy Greenland, we would receive the ambassador's chronicle in a completely different way than we do today," he says, "now something new comes where you think: have they given up or is it just another way to do it?" (quoted in Prasz & Tamer, 2020). If given the chance, the US would “swallow Greenland in one mouthful” he goes on to claim. Needless to say, the distrust and scepticism towards the US’s intentions in the Arctic is growing amongst Danish politicians, yet what exactly can be done about it remains the million-dollar question.

For the most part, Denmark has been participating in the US’s military build-up in the Arctic with reserved criticism. After having visited Greenland, US Ambassador to Denmark Carla Sands wrote that the US “is so glad that Denmark has increased its defence budget. It is fantastic!” (quoted in Holst, 2019), showing once again that the best way to get on the US’s good side, is to go the military way (although according to her, Denmark still isn’t doing enough). There is indeed another fear in

Copenhagen that if Denmark doesn't show its willingness to be active militarily in the Arctic enough, it might be left out entirely, as did happen in 2018 when the UK and US performed a submarine military exercise in Faroese fishing waters without even inviting or letting Denmark know. So as Danish Major and military analyst Hans Peter Michaelsen suggested "if we [Denmark] want to be taken seriously and have a *say* [i.e. influence through access] about the planning and implementation of such future exercises in the responsibility of the Commonwealth, then we must participate in the exercise and assert our influence and present the views of the Commonwealth when necessary." (Michaelsen, 2019; emphasis in original). As he sums it up, if Denmark has nothing to add to the table, it can't be expected to be invited to the table altogether. Hence, asserting its sovereignty in the region might come at the cost of increasing its focus on hard security in order to be included in future Arctic-related happenings. Yet legitimizing and increasing its military presence in the region would require adopting the US's security discourse which may only exacerbate the global bipolarization and Cold War-like tensions in the Arctic. Foreign policy, as I have priorly denoted, is strongly based on projections of national identity and values - and especially when it comes to the process of securitization, a given topic needs to be discursively securitized before it is possible to justify radical actions such as increasing ones military budget and presence in ongoing conflicts (past examples being Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, etc). The problem here seems to be that adopting a 'tough on China and Russia' discourse similar to that of Trump's administration is not one that is reflecting Denmark's foreign policy intentions towards the two powerful countries, and Copenhagen doesn't want to appear as to be increasing military tensions in the Arctic and far largely prefers its role as the intermediary conflict resolution actor.

As history has taught us, a highly securitized Arctic akin to the Cold War could severely decrease Denmark's ability to act unitarily and weaken its sovereignty over Greenland. In a new Cold War, smaller nation states like Denmark could get reabsorbed into the US's Grossraum, 'forced' to adopt a passive position as the larger superpowers battle things out on their own, while the US more and more establishes its own bilateral relations with the world's largest stationary aircraft carrier in the Arctic - i.e. Greenland. In the case of a Cold War strategy in which Denmark actively desires to reaffirm its commitment to the US, there could emerge more situations in which it will be required from Washington to act swiftly and unilaterally on Greenland, overruling its home rule, such as in the case of China's attempt to invest in Greenland's new airport. This in turn, could drive the Greenlandic people further towards full independence, with Denmark losing total control of the island after having overplayed its hand. This 'Catch-22' is at its core the main conundrum facing Danish policy-makers for foreseeable future, and it is difficult to predict exactly how things are going to develop, although they seem to be quite dire for Denmark's role as an Arctic nation no matter what.



## **7. Discussion: A New Administration - A New Hope or a New Turn?**

In November 2020, Donald Trump was defeated in the presidential election against Barack Obama's former Vice President, Joe Biden, who has now assumed the position of president of the United States since January 20st 2021, until at least 2025 when he will be up for re-election. It is at this point still quite early to know how Biden will act as president, but having been in office for 4 months now and having been Vice President before for 8 consecutive years, there are some prior frames of reference that could indicate how he may conduct his foreign and security policy. For many in Denmark, Joe Biden's election comes with the hope of a more normalized relation with the US, as a potentially more agreeable, stable, trustworthy and above all, influenceable ally. As journalist Jacob Svendsen writes in Politiken: "One can almost hear the shoulders lower [i.e. release tension, breath]. A sigh of relief goes over Denmark" (Svendsen, 2020c). Danish foreign minister Jeppe Kofod also diplomatically commented on the results of the election: "It is not because we have not worked closely with the current administration. I can just see that on some agendas we will have it easier with the new administration" (quoted in *ibid.*). One of the main expectations of a Biden presidency is that he will return to the more traditional post-Cold War US foreign policy that focuses on working with its NATO allies, and will potentially also return to an emphasis on a liberal-democratic value discourse. This is something which former Danish ambassador to the US Friis Arne Petersen has already been pondering on in an interview in Politiken (Danielsen, 2020), claiming that

There are going to be a lot of security policy issues where Biden wants to put pressure on China. [H]e will among other things take a tougher course on the Chinese action in the South China Sea. And in general, in the face of the growing size, expression and presence of the Chinese military in the world. [...] Both Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Uighurs and human rights generally will be some huge, huge challenges for Biden.

So it seems, according to Friis Arne Petersen, that China will not be out of the US's focus in Biden's administration, nor will Russia, adding that "with Biden we will also have a different relationship to the world's autocrats. We will see him deal with Putin very critically" (*ibid.*). Biden has indeed already accused Russia of being "the biggest threat against the US" more than once during his presidential campaign (Reuters, 2020), while also calling him a "killer" with "no soul" (Mangan, 2021). When it comes to the Arctic, it can be difficult to expect a return to the Ilulissat Declaration status quo, Petersen implies (quoted in Danielsen, 2020):

Under Biden, we will see a continuing growing American interest in the Arctic. The Arctic will be a new important area that both Biden and his foreign minister will spend a lot of energy on. In particular, having insight into Russian military activities up there is important to the Americans, so the United States under Biden will try to increase their influence.

He continues by stressing out that “the Arctic is not for grabs, and Greenland is as you know not for sale” (ibid.), but he is well aware that Denmark will continue to be placed in a delicate situation in the Arctic, noting: “I think he will recognize Denmark's enormous importance in the Arctic with Greenland and the Faroe Islands. But it is clear that small states must always keep their eyes and ears open when making agreements that deal with such important strategic areas as Greenland and the Arctic” (ibid.). Four other journalists in an article for Politiken (Thomsen et al., 2020) have attempted to project what a Biden administration might entail for Denmark in the Arctic, stressing out in particular the importance of the potential significant shift in rhetoric compared to Trump: “The military focus on the threats in the Arctic and especially regarding the Thule base will continue under Biden, but he will downplay the aggressive demands on Denmark”. Svendsen (2020c) doubts that the US’s Arctic policy and the expected role of Denmark will change much despite a change in rhetoric, claiming “The US military presence [in the Arctic] will grow, and so will demands and expectations for Denmark's contribution in the High North.”

Thus, it seems that Denmark can expect an administration that will continue to focus on the Arctic, will continue to be ‘tough on China’ (although more based on liberal values than on trade wars) and potentially even tougher on Russia. The discourse though, is expected to be different - not potentially towards the US’s vision of the Arctic, but at least towards its allies. By adopting a more liberal-value based discourse, reasserting the US’s identity as a liberal-democratic nation, Biden can hope to have an easier time getting allies on board with the US’s foreign policy, in the same fashion that Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama did when they engaged in conflicts in the Balkans, Middle East and North Africa. But the three main differences for Denmark when it comes to the Arctic as compared to these prior conflicts, I believe, are that

- 1) It is happening in large part on its own territorial soil and waters,
- 2) The enemies are far larger, more powerful countries that Denmark also happens to be quite dependent on regarding other matters (such as trade or gas and oil import), and
- 3) It affects Denmark’s sovereignty over Greenland.

If the situation develops the way most of these journalists, analysts and politicians think they will, Denmark can hardly expect an end to the new Cold War. Military analyst Hans Peter Michaelsen (2019) then asks

It may well be that Denmark does not see the situation in the Arctic with exactly the same seriousness as the United States. But the United States has crucial national strategic security interests at stake in the Arctic. The question is whether, just like during the Cold War, Denmark "crawls back hiding" and leaves the "game board" to the United States. But the world and the Commonwealth have changed a lot in the last 30 years. So a Danish "mousehole strategy" is probably not the best strategy going forward.

What he calls the "mousehole strategy" is indeed Denmark's Cold War strategy of international reticence and reserved isolationism which I developed extensively in chapter 5.1. According to him, Danish 'Arctic-vism' still is the best way forward in a Biden administration, and that only by regaining the US's full respect can Denmark expect to be treated as an equal while its sovereignty in the Arctic is safeguarded. By adopting the discourse in favour of an increasingly militarized Arctic, Denmark could return on the US's 'good side', and also could, according to former Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen make the situation so dire, so 'securitized', that Greenlandic independence will be out of the question. As he claims:

If Greenland ultimately makes a decision on formal independence, then we can now see that it will mean that they will have less sovereignty than they have today. It's quite obvious - just look at a globe. Greenland is located on the North American continent. Greenland is too big a player for anyone to allow full independence. *No way* - it's America's sphere of interest. (quoted in Svendsen, 2020a; emphasis added)

"No way". These are strong words from a former head of state of a country which claims to represent the liberal values that would support a sovereign people's struggle for self-determination and independence. Before Denmark's *Arctic Turn*, the tone was rather different, and the general belief was, as one Danish government's top officials in Greenland stated matter-of-factly: "If the people of Greenland were to decide in a referendum that they wanted independence, they have it. I mean it's not for Denmark to decide" (quoted in Steinberg et al., 2015:85). In many ways, this is still a prevailing position amongst many Danish policy-makers, but so is its commitment to its US-centred security policy. As priorly noted, the process of securitization serves to justify and legitimize drastic actions that may go against political and cultural norms. Could an abandonment of Denmark's

‘cooperation first’ Arctic policy position towards a more confrontational discourse provide the needed legitimacy to potentially drop its liberal self-image and overrule Greenland’s drive towards independence, thus remaining on the US’s good side? Should Denmark fail to adopt such a discourse, could the US claim that Denmark is not taking the Chinese and Russian threat seriously enough, and use such justification to swoop in and ‘take over’ Greenland? (Either literally as during the Cold War or by helping it become independent from Denmark and include it in its own orbit). What will happen at this point very much depends on how Biden and his administration will approach the Arctic.

Nonetheless, ever since Trump’s election as president of the United States, there has been a growing sentiment among many EU nations that the US is too unreliable as a security partner, and that maybe EU nations should look inward for a more manageable and trustworthy security alliance (Robert Schuman Foundation, 2020). The concept of an EU security alliance and/or an EU army has been on the table ever since its creation, but never really materialized as an alternative to NATO, given how 22 EU member states out of 27 are also part of NATO. Denmark is the only EU country coasting the Arctic ocean but has been reluctant in the past to associate with any EU security alliances such as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) or the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). This hasn’t stopped the EU from being Denmark’s most important foreign policy ally on almost every other aspect than hard security, sharing an almost unshakable value system, as former Danish Foreign Minister Møller expressed in 2004:

[W]hat makes the EU special is the continuous commitment to some fundamental values [...] These are values we have inherited from Christianity, the respect of the individual, from Greece democracy, freedom of thought and expression and the right to doubt, from Rome a state of rights and tolerance, and from the Enlightenment limits to the powers of the state, and the free market. (Møller, 2004)

Møller also claimed in 2007 that “[the] EU is our most important alliance and in most cases we conduct our policies with our partners in the EU” (Møller, 2007), while a 2003 government paper on the priorities in Danish foreign policy stated that “The EU is the key to Denmark’s ability to influence the world around us” (Government of Denmark, 2003). For Møller in 2007, striking a fine balance between EU and US cooperation was seen as the best way for Denmark to move forward (Møller, 2007). Yet as the political climate and Denmark’s relation to the US has been shifting since these statements were proclaimed over a decade ago, there is a new growing political position that Denmark should seek a security rapprochement with the EU. These new sentiments have become more prominent in great part due to Donald Trump’s visible disdain towards many NATO allies. Former

Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen confirmed this potential change in policy during a meeting with France's president Emmanuel Macron, admitting that Denmark wants to cooperate immediately and "as much as possible" (quoted in Euractiv, 2018) within the limits of its defence opt-out from the EU – one of four opt-outs put into practice in 1993 after Danes rejected full EU membership the year before. He confessed to the role of Trump's presidency behind the meeting, stating "One reason is that transatlantic relations are changing these days; we both realised that during the last summit. So we have to take greater responsibility for our own security" (ibid.)

It is conjured that Denmark's post-Cold War security doctrine has been heavily challenged over the last four years, and whether or not Biden will be able to remedy that is not yet certain. The EU is not a strong Arctic player, and doesn't even have the status as a permanent observer in the Arctic Council due to the veto imposed against it from Canada (the reason being that the EU doesn't allow the trade of Canadian fur in the EU single market) (Steinberg et al., 2015:174). The other two EU Arctic nations, Sweden and Finland, are not coastal states - so even though they can participate in the Arctic Council, they have very little influence over Arctic ocean geopolitics, and they aren't for example signatories of the Ilulissat Declaration. Yet entering a more comprehensive EU security alliance either on top of or instead of NATO could give Denmark the necessary leverage to maintain its sovereignty over Greenland while preserving a non-US aligned, non-Cold War Arctic discourse which seems to be Denmark's preferred position overall. Maybe this could open up for a certain 'third way' that wouldn't be the mousehole strategy of the Cold War, nor the activist doctrine of the post-Cold War era. This could potentially provide Denmark along with Greenland the opportunity to become sort of 'middlemen' between the US and China/Russia in the Arctic, taking on the role as conflict resolution actors instead of drivers of a *neo-terra nullius* imaginary. Granted, this will very likely lead to a loss of influence in Washington, but with a more liberal-oriented Biden administration, maybe a Danish-led reaffirmed Ilulissat declaration imaginary can gain more traction should it be framed in a discourse that resonates with these values. Denmark, as an Arctic coastal state with the backing of a less confrontational EU security alliance may possess the necessary institutional knowledge and power to rearticulate the regional discourse towards the Arctic. Countering the might of the US is not an easy task, or a task that any small nation probably wishes to have to perform, but it could be worth it in the long run - both for Denmark, Greenland, Arctic peace and all nations dreading the reality of a new Cold War.

## 8. Conclusion

I have in this thesis shown that Denmark as an Arctic nation is facing unprecedented new challenges that will most likely only become more real and problematic in the years to come. These challenges which are reminiscent of the Cold War are deeply related to Denmark's post-Cold War security policy of relying almost exclusively on the US for security - a policy that has come with the cost of following US foreign policy no matter how interventionist, imperialist or globally destabilizing they may be. Ever since the end of the Cold War, the US has been using a very specific discourse emphasizing the importance of liberal-democratic values such as democracy and human rights in order to justify an interventionist foreign policy mainly in the global South, with the aim of promoting its own national interests abroad. For the most part, in line with its new post-Cold War activist foreign policy, Denmark has been appropriating the same discourse to legitimize in the eyes of its domestic population as well as the international community its active participation in almost all new conflicts engendered by the US. A major achievement of this new doctrine for Denmark was managing to secure its spot as one of the US's closest allies. Denmark's unquestioned support helped it nurture a special relationship with the US that would guarantee it the US's uncompromised support and security, and would allow Danish politicians to gain a greater access to the White House, thus achieving a stronger degree of influence within the world's largest economic and military superpower. Denmark's new activist post-Cold War doctrine was a break with its prior Cold War policy which was based rather around an *ad hoc* support to the US, mainly by allowing the presence of US military personnel and research stations on Greenland (Danish sovereign territory). Greenland was at the height of the Cold War especially Denmark's only bargaining chip within the US-led NATO, which allowed it to focus instead on domestic issues like developing its extensive welfare state system, while leaving all matters of hard security to the US.

As I detailed, the Arctic was a region of high security importance mainly during the height of the Cold War when technological advancements in warfare made the North of the globe the shortest route for a missile to fly between Washington and Moscow. Militarizing the Arctic then became a priority for US national security, and Greenland which was perceived as the 'world's largest aircraft carrier' located on the American continent became Washington's main player in the region. Denmark's 'mousehole' foreign policy at the time had allowed for the US to extend its control over the island even to the extent that Denmark actually lost a significant degree of sovereignty over it. The geopolitical situation of the Cold War was seen as way too dire to allow for the Soviets to possibly gain control of the island, and the American great-power rivalry discourse at the time served to justify these actions - a feat accomplished through the process of discourse securitization. It was only once

the Cold War ended in 1991 that it became possible for the Arctic to ‘breath’ once again, as new pacifist movements emerged with the intent of desecuritizing the region, by shifting the focus from military security to other new concepts such as ‘human security’ and ‘environmental security’. It was only once the region was desecuritized that it was possible to process with new pan-national Arctic projects such as the self-determination movements of the local indigenous people, infrastructural development, denuclearization and environmental protection. The aim was to abandon the old Cold War imaginaries of the Arctic as a region of potential conflict, to a region of international peace, prosperity, and cooperation. The establishing of the Arctic Council in 1996 served to institutionalize this discourse and make it the official status quo imaginary, hereby strengthening its resilience against other competing imaginaries such as the *terra nullius* imaginary and the ‘scramble for the Arctic’.

Denmark’s new post-Cold War activist foreign policy extended to the Arctic, where it capitalized on the US’s new disinterest in the region to promote peace and cooperation between the Arctic nations. Denmark held true to its liberal values as it made more space for the Inuits of Greenland to achieve greater self-determination and independence from Denmark. In a desecuritized Arctic, allowing for such developments was far less problematic than during the Cold War, where an independent Arctic could be seen as a potential fertile ground for an enemy take-over. The end of the Cold War which in Fukuyamaist terms signified the ‘end of history’ had created new hopes for the world where liberalism had officially ‘won’, and thus a new conflict in the Arctic seemed almost impossible. Institutionalizing the Arctic through the Arctic Council and other Arctic low politics institutions had served the purpose of gathering the two old nemesis, US and Russia, into new cooperative alliances that were to work together to deal with common Arctic challenges, rather than against one another. Denmark’s position was thus to maintain this climate of cooperation, as keeping the Arctic as a zone of low tensions was perceived as the best way for it to maintain its sovereignty over Greenland and thus its position as an Arctic country altogether. Although Greenlanders were striving for more independence, at least the island was no longer susceptible to a potential US or Soviet take-over, as the island and the Arctic were now ‘off the radar’ - especially in the US, who after the Cold War had turned their attention towards fighting its ‘war on terror’ in the global South.

It was only once Russian explorers went ahead and planted a Russian flag at the bottom of the Arctic ocean at the geographical North Pole in 2007 that new fears of conflict and a ‘race for the Arctic’ remerged, after almost two decades of having had no major conflicts in the region. Denmark then utilized its role as a close US ally and Arctic mediator to gather the five Arctic coastal states in an impromptu meeting in the town of Ilulissat, Greenland, to ratify a new agreement reaffirming the status quo imaginary of the Arctic as a ‘solved’ region guided by well-established international laws

such as the UNCLOS. The signing of the Ilulissat declaration was seen as a great Danish diplomatic accomplishment, capitalizing on its unique access to the White House to bring the US to the negotiation table and reaffirm its commitment to a conflict-free Arctic. Nonetheless, the event seemed to have sparked a new epoch in Arctic geopolitics exacerbated by a rapidly changing Arctic climate and the melting of Arctic sea ice caused by climate change. The Danish government undertook a so-called 'Arctic turn' in its discourse and policy towards Greenland, downgrading Greenland as an independent nation to a strategic nation within the Kingdom of Denmark. The 'turn' was done with the intention of safeguarding Denmark's sovereignty over Greenland as well as establishing itself more strongly as an 'Arctic great power'. Yet it was perceived by some other states as a Danish remilitarization of the Arctic.

It was mainly since Donald Trump's election as president of the United States that the 'new Cold War' discourse really went into full gear, as he and his administration ramped up tensions with China as the US's number one threat. The Democrats, as Trump's main opposition party, on the other hand framed Russia as the US's main enemy, believing that Putin had intervened in the 2016 election with the aim of helping Trump win. Trump's harsh discourse against US NATO allies compromised Denmark's privileged access to the White House, being told instead that it does not contribute enough to NATO in terms of military spending. Although Denmark attempted to make things well again by increasing its military spending, its relationship to the US was no longer what it used to be. The biggest moment of friction between the two nations happened a little over a year ago when Trump proclaimed he wanted to purchase Greenland from Denmark - an offer which was very badly received in Denmark, as exemplified in the many pejorative statements from Danish politicians, journalists and experts at the time.

Even though the transactional deal was never even close to happening, the US's renewed interest in Greenland and the Arctic as an area of security concern was out, exposing an unsettling truth for the Kingdom of Denmark which for years had tried to keep the region as low tension. Trump and his administration's new Cold War rhetoric towards China and Russia started spilling into the Arctic, leading the US to take on new measures to combat the two emerging superpowers in a thawing and melting Arctic. This put Denmark in a new conundrum where it finds itself stuck between its doctrine of uncompromised support to US foreign policy and a *de facto* adopting of its discourses that resembles that of the 1950's and 1960's on the one hand, and its own Arctic foreign policy of doing whatever is possible to not revert back to a Cold War-like era situation in the Arctic on the other. Many Danish politicians have been finding it difficult to identify with and hence go along with Trump's populist and illiberal discourse, believed to hardly reflect the liberal-democratic values



Denmark identifies with, and hence raises the question of whether there are inherently irredeemable and potential deal-breaking predicaments to Denmark's post-Cold War security doctrine.

I round up the thesis by discussing what the future may bring for Denmark in terms of security and foreign policy, with the prospects of a new Biden presidency and what could be seen as a potential 'turn to Europe'. There remains today a deep scepticism that the US's Arctic policy will drastically change under a Biden administration, as well as its confrontational approach to Russia and China. Although the general discourse under a Biden administration will most likely be very different than Trump's - likely to be recentred around liberal-democratic values and internationalism - it isn't certain that the policies will change much. In fact, there is a very real fear that the new Cold War in the Arctic will only worsen under a Biden administration, as China and Russia are making themselves evermore present as active players in the region. It is very likely, some Danish pundits claim, that Biden will continue Trump's push for militarization in the Arctic, and the US's growing interest and influence over Greenland - it will simply be done with a very different tone.

I then go on to argue that a potential rapprochement towards the EU (Denmark's main foreign policy partner in every aspect other than security) on security matters could provide Denmark with the necessary backing to counter both the US as well as China and Russia in the Arctic, and thus attempt to re-establish the Arctic order that prevailed in the first two decades after the Cold War. This would better and more truthfully reflect the national interests of Denmark in the Arctic and could help mitigate the conundrum that Denmark is currently facing in the Arctic between a potential loss of sovereignty or a loss of security. It may also be what is best for the Greenlandic people, who could benefit from a non-militarized homeland, which may make them appreciate their relationship with Denmark more as its main pacifist security partner, protected also through the EU. It could also make it easier for Greenland to attract investments from all sides of the globe, and not only the West. Such a new 'Arctic Turn' could potentially reaffirm Greenland's commitment to Copenhagen, and a desire to remain within the Danish Commonwealth – something the Danish government most likely would appreciate. In the end, shifting the political Arctic discourse away from high and back to low politics would still be the best way to combat some of the other pressing issues facing the Arctic such as climate change, environmental protection, and indigenous rights (Schreiber & DeGeorge, 2021), and make more room for non-state actors to have a say in Arctic governance as did happen during the 'Arctic Boom' of the 1990s. Indeed, the Cold War had the negative impact of almost completely freezing development and cooperation efforts in the Arctic - and as things are looking like right now, if a continuous desecuritization of the Arctic doesn't take place, it may very well be that the new Cold War will have similar consequences.

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