

Economic Interests, Environmental Concerns, and Multilateral Governance – The German Approach to the Arctic

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➤ Three Main Problems of German Arctic Policy

- Germany is not an Arctic country, hence influence in the region depends on the regional powers (*Problem of Recognition*)
- Germany cannot act alone to be influential, but needs the framework of NATO or the European Union as force multipliers; „indirect actor“ in the region (*Problem of Autonomy*)
- Germany does not have a Arctic Strategy like Russia, Canada or the US, outlining political goals, setting priorities and defining instruments; Lack of coordinated policy formulation (*Problem of Cohesion*)
- Nevertheless: Recent German Governments have „discovered“ the Arctic and defined a set of interests

Background for Germany's Arctic Policy

- **Changes in geopolitical context of the Arctic**
 - From Cold War competition to cooperation
 - Renewed geopolitical tensions
- **Climate Change**
 - Global warming as a danger to the Arctic region
 - Global warming as opportunity: transit routes and natural resources
- **Globalization and Development**
- **Three Dimensions:**
- **a) Economic (Trade/Energy/Resources)**
- **b) Environment**
- **c) Security**

German Interests in the Arctic I: Economic

➤ Transit routes through the Arctic

- Germany ranks second of the world's export countries.
- Almost 90% of its exports are transported by sea.
- Especially trade with East Asia has increased markedly in the last 5 years.
- An opening of the northern sea routes would shorten trade routes by 40%.

➤ German interests in:

- Open and secure maritime transport routes/ Settlement of territorial disputes
- Establishment of a search and rescue system (SAR)

German Interests in the Arctic II: Energy

- **Untapped potential of hydrocarbon resources**
- **German dependence on energy imports**
 - German energy imports account for 82,3 billion Euro/per year
 - 58% of Germany's gas and oil is imported from Norway and Russia
- **German industrial cooperation**
 - Joint ventures and know how in exploring energy resources

Resources and trade routes as security issues:

2011 Defense Policy Guidelines

„Free trade routes and a secure supply of raw materials are crucial for the future of Germany and Europe. Around the globe, changes are taking place in markets, channels of distribution, and the ways in which natural resources are developed, secured and accessed. The scarcity of energy sources and other commodities required for high- technology products will have implications for the international community. Restricted access can trigger conflicts. Disruptions of transport routes and the flow of raw materials and commodities, e.g. by piracy or the sabotage of air transport, pose a threat to security and prosperity. This is why transport and energy security and related issues will play an increasingly important role for our security“. (DPG 2011: 3)

German Interests in the Arctic III: Environmental Concerns

➤ Germany as a leader in environmental issues

- Germany as set itself ambitious goals for climate protection nationally and internationally.
- Climate change and rapid effects on the Arctic
- Effects on flora and fauna
- Pollution and damages through increased economic activity

Foreign Minister **Westerwelle** (March 2011) :

"The (...) goal [of German foreign policy] is ensuring that the strictest environmental standards are observed. The Arctic is a unique habitat, beautiful and fragile. The injuries inflicted by mankind will not heal without help. This context also reveals the limits of the traditional concept of sovereignty, which views sovereignty above all as a right. This concept of sovereignty has long since been complemented by the idea of sovereignty as a duty. Perhaps there has been too much talk in the past of "Arctic rights" and not enough of "Arctic duties"."

➤ Germany as a leading nation in Arctic research

- Research and sovereignty of Arctic states: harmonization and simplification of administrative procedures.

German Interests in the Arctic IV: Security?

- **Unresolved territorial disputes in the Arctic**
- **Relevance for German security?**
 - Security as territorial defense
 - Security as economic and energy security

General approach of German Arctic Policy:

- **No „Grand Strategy“ for the Arctic**
- **Bureaucratic Politics: Arctic Policy is divided between the Foreign Office, the MoD and the Ministry for the Environment**
- **Differing Priorities and Instruments :**
 - **International Law and Multilateral Governance**
 - **Military Policy and Regional Security**
 - **Environmental Standards**

General approach of German Arctic Policy:

- **International Regulations: International Arctic treaty; Moratorium on exploiting natural resources (like the Antarctic treaty)**
- **Reflection of the „traditional“ German foreign policy approach: Primacy of international law and international organisations.**
- **Germany seeks to solve outstanding issues within the framework of multilateral institutions:**
 - **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**
 - **Search and rescue**
 - **Environmental standards**

What room to manoeuvre?

➤ Institutional Power

- Observer Arctic Council (Germany not really heard and influential)

➤ Which role for NATO?

- Political and military assets for Arctic security
- Dangers in overemphasizing a role for NATO

➤ Which Role for the EU?

Conclusion

➤ Germany in the Arctic - More Onlooker than Actor

- Lack of Recognition
- Lack of Strategy/ Cohesion
- Lack of Autonomy
- Thank you for your attention!

Selected Literature

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