

# ARCTIC DOCTRINE, CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES OF AMERICAN TERRITORIAL EXPANSIONISM UNDER TRUMP'S SECOND ADMINISTRATION (2025–2029)

<https://doi.org/10.4215/rm2025.e24013>

Ugeda, L. <sup>a\*</sup> - Sanches, K. <sup>b</sup>

(a) PhD in Geography

**ORCID:** <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6073-6878>. **LATTES:** <http://lattes.cnpq.br/9368120455386031>.

(b) PhD Student in Law

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9994-1550>. **LATTES:** <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0292024954401422>.

## Article history:

Received 06 March, 2024

Accepted 31 May, 2024

Published 10 June, 2025

## (\*) CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

**Address:** UnB. Departamento de Geografia, GEA ICC, Norte 900, Zip Code: 70.910-900, Brasília (DF), Brazil. Phone: (+55 61) 3107-7253

**E-mail:** [luiz.ugeda@gmail.com](mailto:luiz.ugeda@gmail.com)

## Abstract

This article examines the economic, strategic, and geopolitical implications of American territorial expansionism in the Arctic during Donald Trump's second administration (2025–2029), particularly focusing on discourse advocating for the incorporation of Canada and Greenland into the United States. The text explores the economic relevance of the Arctic as a source of rare minerals, oil, and gas, as well as new maritime routes emerging due to polar ice melting. Drawing on classical geopolitical theories such as the balance of power and control of territorial pivots, the study analyzes the impact of Arctic militarization, the presence of powers like China and Russia, and challenges involving Indigenous populations and local governance. The findings suggest that American initiatives in the Arctic reflect long-term interests combining national security, resource exploitation, and global power projection.

**Keywords:** Geopolitics; Canada; Greenland; Militarization; Maritime Routes; Natural Resources.

## Resumo / Resumen

### DOCTRINA DO ÁRTICO, DESAFIOS E PERSPECTIVAS DO EXPANSIONISMO TERRITORIAL AMERICANO NA SEGUNDA ADMINISTRAÇÃO TRUMP (2025–2029)

Este artigo examina as implicações econômicas, estratégicas e geopolíticas do expansionismo territorial americano no Ártico durante a segunda administração de Donald Trump (2025–2029), com ênfase no discurso que defende a incorporação do Canadá e da Groenlândia aos Estados Unidos. O texto explora a relevância econômica do Ártico como fonte de minerais raros, petróleo e gás, além das novas rotas marítimas que surgem devido ao derretimento do gelo polar. Baseando-se em teorias geopolíticas clássicas, como o equilíbrio de poder e o controle de pivôs territoriais, o estudo analisa o impacto da militarização do Ártico, a presença de potências como China e Rússia e os desafios envolvendo populações indígenas e governança local. Os resultados sugerem que as iniciativas americanas no Ártico refletem interesses de longo prazo, combinando segurança nacional, exploração de recursos e projeção de poder global.

**Palavras-chave:** Geopolítica; Canadá; Groenlândia; Militarização; Rotas Marítimas; Recursos Naturais.

### DOCTRINA DEL ÁRTICO, DESAFÍOS Y PERSPECTIVAS DEL EXPANSIONISMO TERRITORIAL ESTADOUNIDENSE EN LA SEGUNDA ADMINISTRACIÓN DE TRUMP (2025–2029)

Este artículo examina las implicaciones económicas, estratégicas y geopolíticas del expansionismo territorial estadounidense en el Ártico durante la segunda administración de Donald Trump (2025–2029), centrándose en el discurso que aboga por la incorporación de Canadá y Groenlandia a los Estados Unidos. El texto explora la relevancia económica del Ártico como fuente de minerales raros, petróleo y gas, así como las nuevas rutas marítimas que surgen debido al derretimiento del hielo polar. Basándose en teorías geopolíticas clásicas, como el equilibrio de poder y el control de pivotes territoriales, el estudio analiza el impacto de la militarización del Ártico, la presencia de potencias como China y Rusia, y los desafíos relacionados con las poblaciones indígenas y la gobernanza local. Los hallazgos sugieren que las iniciativas estadounidenses en el Ártico reflejan intereses a largo plazo que combinan seguridad nacional, explotación de recursos y proyección de poder global.

**Palabras-clave:** Geopolítica; Canadá; Groenlandia; Militarización; Rutas Marítimas; Recursos Naturales.

## INTRODUCTION

The Arctic region has become increasingly central to global geopolitics due to the impact of climate change, the abundance of natural resources, and the potential for new maritime routes (Knecht & Keil, 2018). A recent episode involving U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, who openly expressed interest in incorporating Canada, Greenland, and the Panama Canal (CNN, 2025; Los Angeles Times, 2025), highlights how ideas of American territorial expansionism continue to spark global debates. In a press conference, Trump suggested the annexation of Canada as the "51st state," arguing that the current border between the two countries is artificial. He also mentioned the possibility of tariffs against the Canadian government and threatened Denmark to gain control over Greenland, citing national security concerns.

Should these ideas progress, the United States would become the largest nation in terms of geographical area, surpassing Russia, which currently has a territorial expanse of approximately 17.1 million square kilometers (World Bank, 2025). The combined territorial area of the new country would reach around 22 million square kilometers, encompassing the 9.8 million km<sup>2</sup> of the United States (US Census Bureau, 2025), the 9.9 million km<sup>2</sup> of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2025), and the 2.1 million km<sup>2</sup> of Greenland (Statistics Greenland, 2025). The federal configuration would likely be restructured, incorporating 13 new states from Canada's provinces and territories and one state representing Greenland, bringing the total to 64 states and reflecting a hypothetical political reorganization to accommodate this integration.

The economy resulting from the integration of the United States, Canada, and Greenland would consolidate a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of approximately \$30 trillion, making it the largest in the world. The GDP of the United States was estimated at \$26.85 trillion in 2023 (World Bank, 2025), while Canada's GDP stood at about \$2.14 trillion in the same year (World Bank, 2025). Although Greenland's GDP, valued at approximately \$3 billion, is modest (Statistics Greenland, 2025), its contribution of natural resources would be strategic. Greenland holds vast reserves of minerals such as zinc, lead, iron ore, coal, molybdenum, gold, platinum, and uranium (Congressional Research Service, 2024). Canada would further contribute a diversified economy supported by exports of oil, natural gas, timber, and minerals (Natural Resources Canada, 2025). This "Arctic Doctrine" would create the world's most powerful economic entity with extensive geopolitical influence, underpinned by vast resources and complementary economic sectors. It would arguably become more self-sufficient than most other nations, given its near-complete autonomy in essential resources for development.

The United States' maritime boundary with Russia, currently confined to the Bering Strait in Alaska, would significantly expand in the Arctic due to adjacent maritime zones controlled by Greenland. This new maritime boundary would stretch approximately 3,700 kilometers, comparable to the length of the Mediterranean Sea from Israel to Gibraltar. This potential scenario would entirely reshape the geopolitical balance in the Arctic, consolidating American dominance over vast areas rich in resources and maritime routes. Such a transformation would significantly alter the power dynamics among major global players.

The following sections will provide a brief historical overview of American intentions in Canada and Greenland, examining their military, diplomatic, and economic dimensions.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF AMERICAN INTENTIONS TO INCORPORATE CANADA

Since colonial times, the relationship between the territories now comprising the United States and Canada has been marked by tensions and expansionist ambitions. During the American War of Independence (1775–1783), American revolutionaries attempted to conquer Canadian territories, believing that Francophone and British colonists might support their cause against the United Kingdom. This effort culminated in the invasion of Quebec in 1775, led by Benedict Arnold and Richard Montgomery. Despite initial victories, local resistance, combined with the population's allegiance to the British Empire, led to the campaign's failure (Stanley, 2021; Wood, 2005). This episode marked the beginning of American interest in expanding its borders northward.

In the early 19th century, during the War of 1812, the United States again sought to annex Canadian territories. The conflict, triggered by trade and maritime tensions with the United Kingdom, included American offensives in regions such as Ontario. However, the combination of experienced British troops and local Canadian militias thwarted significant advances, reinforcing the territorial division between the two countries and consolidating a distinct Canadian identity (Taylor, 2010; Berton, 2011). This episode solidified the perception that Canada would not be easily integrated, despite American aspirations.

As the United States expanded territorially throughout the 19th century, including the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the annexation of Texas in 1845, ideas of annexing Canada became more speculative. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 and the concept of Manifest Destiny reaffirmed the belief that the United States had the right to expand its borders across the North American continent. While this narrative was largely directed toward westward and southern expansion, Canada occasionally surfaced in expansionist rhetoric (Stephanson, 1996; Weeks, 1997).

Throughout the American Civil War (1861–1865), Canada was viewed by the United States as a potential base for British support to the Confederates. Despite the absence of direct confrontations, diplomatic tensions arose due to attacks by Confederate groups operating from Canada. After the war, interest in the annexation of Canada diminished, though sporadic debates continued to emerge within American political circles (Granatstein & Hillmer, 1991). The creation of the Canadian Confederation in 1867 solidified Canadian national identity, further complicating any territorial integration efforts.

The late 19th century saw a shift toward a more diplomatic approach. While there were no direct attempts to annex Canada, the United States sought to increase its economic and political influence in the region. Growing trade relations, driven by geographic proximity and the development of transcontinental railways, created significant economic interdependence. This context reduced the necessity for direct annexation, although the idea persisted as a potential future scenario (Stephanson, 1996).

Across the 20th century, the relationship between the United States and Canada solidified into a strategic partnership, especially following World War II. The establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 formalized the alliance between the two nations, underscoring Canada's role in the collective security of the West (Chapnick, 2011). Nonetheless, ideas of territorial integration continued to appear in academic and political discourse. Canada's vast natural resources—such as oil, gas, and minerals—and its strategic position in the Arctic drew the interest of American leaders, who often argued that the two countries shared common economic and defense objectives (Berton, 2011; Roucek, 1951).

During the Cold War (1947–1991), given that the shortest path between Russia and the United States passes through Canada and Greenland, the establishment of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) in 1958 solidified collaboration between the United States and Canada in aerospace defense. This joint initiative aimed to monitor and protect North American airspace against potential Soviet threats, underscoring Canada's geostrategic relevance to U.S. security. NORAD operated as a binational structure, combining military and technological resources from both nations and overseeing advanced warning and interception systems. While this cooperation strengthened bilateral relations, it also sparked debates within Canada regarding the limits of U.S. influence over Canadian sovereignty and defense policy (Charron, 2015; Granatstein & Hillmer, 1999).

More recently, statements by American leaders have reignited discussions about the annexation of Canada. In 2019, for example, then-President Donald Trump, during his first term, publicly suggested the possibility of incorporating Canada as the 51st U.S. state. Although widely interpreted as political rhetoric, such remarks reflect the perception that Canada represents a natural extension of U.S. territorial and economic interests (Wood, 2005). The growing interest in the Arctic, exacerbated by climate change and the discovery of natural resources, has made Canada even more central to American geopolitics (Stephenson & Smith, 2015).

From a geopolitical perspective, the integration of Canada into the United States would represent an unprecedented shift with significant global ramifications. Such a move would profoundly impact global political and economic dynamics, particularly concerning NATO allies and powers such as China and Russia. However, the historical record of these aspirations reveals that, while annexation has been a

recurring objective, it has consistently encountered cultural, political, and military barriers that have prevented its realization (Granatstein & Hillmer, 1991; Chapnick, 2011).

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF AMERICAN INTENTIONS TO INCORPORATE GREENLAND

Since the late 19th century, the United States has demonstrated strategic interest in Greenland due to its unique geographical position and abundance of natural resources. Following the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867, discussions emerged among American political and military leaders about the possibility of acquiring Greenland as part of a broader strategy to expand influence in the Northern Hemisphere, strengthening U.S. control over polar maritime routes (Fogelson, 1989; Stephanson, 1996). In the early 20th century, the advancement of aviation and the need for Arctic bases heightened the island's strategic importance. During World War I, Greenland was already considered a key point for monitoring transatlantic routes and later became even more significant during World War II. In 1941, the United States temporarily assumed military control of the island to protect it from potential Nazi attacks, marking the beginning of a continuous strategic presence (Archer, 1988; Weigert, 1944).

In 1946, the U.S. government made a formal offer to purchase Greenland from Denmark for \$100 million under the leadership of President Harry Truman. This proposal was driven by military considerations, including the need for advanced Arctic bases to defend against potential Soviet threats, as well as interest in exploiting the island's natural resources. However, Denmark rejected the offer, stating that Greenland was an integral part of its territory and held significant cultural and political importance for the kingdom (Martin-Nielsen, 2012; Henriksen & Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2017).

Over the course of the Cold War, Greenland became a strategic point for the United States. The construction of the Thule Air Base in 1951 reinforced the American presence in the region and played a central role in the early warning system against Soviet nuclear attacks (Harmsen, 2024). The island's geographic isolation and proximity to polar air routes made it a prominent actor in the U.S. nuclear deterrence strategy. Military cooperation between the United States and Denmark solidified Greenland as a strategic asset within the context of the bipolar conflict.

In the post-Cold War period, American interest in Greenland remained steady, albeit with a renewed focus on economic and environmental aspects. The emergence of new maritime routes, such as the Northwest Passage, enhanced the island's strategic value (Stephenson & Smith, 2015). Greenland is home to vast reserves of oil, natural gas, and rare minerals, including rare earth elements critical for advanced technologies, attracting the attention of global powers like China and Russia (Congressional Research Service, 2024). In 2019, statements by former President Donald Trump suggesting the purchase of Greenland reignited debates about the island's role in American geopolitics. Although widely interpreted as political rhetoric, the proposal was promptly rejected by both the Danish government and Greenland's autonomous government, which emphasized that the island was not for sale. This episode sparked international reactions, with analyses highlighting the United States' long-term interest in the region (Lanteigne, 2019; Pezard et al., 2022; Rahbek-Clemmensen & Thomasen, 2019).

The growing presence of China in Greenland has become a concern for the United States. Chinese companies have invested in mining and infrastructure, seeking access to rare earth elements essential for advanced technologies. In response, Washington has intensified its diplomatic and economic presence, opening a consulate in Nuuk in 2020 and offering financial incentives to counter Chinese expansion (Lajeunesse & Lackenbauer, 2018; Sørensen, 2021). Climate change and melting Arctic glaciers have further increased Greenland's geopolitical relevance (Mohr, 2020). Emerging maritime routes, such as the Northwest Passage, and the potential for exploiting previously inaccessible natural resources have turned the region into a focus of competition among global powers, including the United States, China, and Russia (Weber, 2020).

Historically, Denmark's and the local population's resistance have been the primary obstacles to American ambitions. From the rejection of President Harry Truman's 1946 proposal to the more recent refusal in 2019, Denmark has maintained its sovereignty over the island. Contributing to this stance is the growing movement for greater autonomy in Greenland, driven by Inuit cultural pride and natural



resources, which has reinforced local determination to decide the island's future (Gad & Strandsbjerg, 2018; Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2019). Nevertheless, while formal proposals have been declined, Greenland's increasing importance in Arctic disputes ensures that it will remain a focal point in international relations (Lanteigne, 2020; Sørensen, 2021).

## THE INTEGRATION OF CANADA AND GREENLAND INTO THE UNITED STATES: MILITARY, DIPLOMATIC, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

The integration of Canada and Greenland into the United States, although hypothetical, carries significant implications in the field of geopolitics. According to Dodds and Nuttall (2019), the Arctic has become a space where sovereignty, resources, and environmental security intersect with global dynamics. In this context, control over the Arctic would provide crucial logistical and economic advantages, positioning any dominant nation as an even more influential global power.

Historically, the geopolitical interest of the United States in the Arctic has been shaped by its strategic position between North America, Europe, and Asia. Alfred Thayer Mahan's (2011) theory of sea power emphasized the importance of controlling maritime routes to consolidate global hegemony. The Arctic, with its accelerated ice melt, offers the possibility of significantly shortening trade routes between continents, as emphasized by Emmerson (2010). Thus, the integration of Canada and Greenland into the United States would consolidate control over vital maritime corridors and enhance the United States' capacity for power projection.

Greenland, as a strategic territory in the North Atlantic, possesses abundant natural resources, including rare earth elements and minerals essential for advanced technologies. Halford Mackinder's (1904) "geographical pivot" theory underscores that control of strategic regions can influence the global balance of power. This perspective is echoed by Østhagen (2020), who notes that Greenland is a key player in Arctic dynamics, not only due to its proximity to the Arctic Circle but also because of its location at the crossroads of intercontinental air and maritime routes. This position makes the island a strategic asset, both in terms of security and economic exploitation.

In the case of Canada, U.S. interest is closely tied to its vast natural resource reserves and extensive Arctic territory. Territorial integration would grant direct access to northern Canadian energy resources, which are critical for the global energy transition. According to Sale and Potapov (2010), the Arctic is essential for meeting global demands for oil and natural gas, as well as freshwater supplies. The integration of Canada would provide the United States with a dominant position regarding these reserves, strengthening its ability to compete with other powers such as Russia and China.

Furthermore, the concept of expanded security, as discussed by Buzan et al. (1998), highlights that polar regions are increasingly regarded as strategic areas for national defense. The Thule Air Base, located in Greenland, already plays a central role in the United States' early warning system against nuclear threats, as analyzed by Conley and Melino (2021). The formal integration of these territories would further enhance the U.S.'s capacity to monitor adversarial military activities in the Arctic.

Finally, the hypothetical integration of Canada and Greenland into the United States would raise complex legal and diplomatic challenges, particularly concerning sovereignty and the rights of Indigenous populations. According to Young (2000), any attempt to alter the political structure of local populations in the region would require legitimacy through inclusive consultations and negotiations. This process would involve not only the directly affected states but also international organizations such as the Arctic Council, which governs cooperation in the region.

### MILITARY DIMENSION

The military geopolitics of the Arctic is defined by the region where major powers share borders. From the American military perspective, the integration of Canada and Greenland into the United States' sphere of influence can be interpreted as a strategy to neutralize third-party interests and consolidate a U.S.-dominated Arctic frontier. This perspective is anchored in classical geopolitical

doctrine, particularly Mackinder's Heartland concept (1904), which emphasizes the strategic advantage of controlling central regions like the Arctic to achieve global supremacy. The effective incorporation of these areas would enable the United States not only to secure direct control over vast natural resources and strategic maritime routes but also to significantly limit the influence of rival powers such as Russia and China (Henriksen & Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2017).

Despite Canada's formal sovereignty and its long-standing partnership with the United States, tensions have arisen due to the increasing militarization of the Arctic, disputes over maritime passages, and China's involvement in regional infrastructure projects (Borgerson, 2013). For Washington, Greenland holds a particularly critical role in Arctic geopolitics, given its historical importance in strategic surveillance operations, such as those conducted from the Thule Air Base during the Cold War (Martin-Nielsen, 2012). Thus, incorporating Canada and Greenland into a more direct control framework is seen as essential by the United States to ensure the security of its defense lines and protect vital economic interests in the region, aligning with the view that Arctic dominance could redefine the global balance of power. The militarization of the Arctic also involves Russia, which maintains a significant presence in the region by rebuilding Soviet-era bases and modernizing its fleet of nuclear-powered icebreakers (Baev, 2019). This move is interpreted as an effort to consolidate control over vast maritime and terrestrial areas within the Arctic Circle, enhancing Russia's military capacity to compete with NATO. The balance of power theory, as discussed by Waltz (1979), suggests that Russia's actions in the Arctic are a response to the growing militarization of the region by other powers, including the United States and its allies. Consequently, the Arctic emerges as a space where deterrence and power projection capabilities intertwine with global security interests.

The Chinese presence in the Arctic adds another layer of complexity to the region's military geopolitics. Although China is not an Arctic state, it identifies itself as a "near-Arctic state" and has invested in naval and logistical capabilities to operate in the region (Lanteigne, 2017). China's strategy, rooted in the theory of a "sphere of influence," seeks to expand its presence in the Arctic through economic and scientific partnerships, often challenging the security interests of the United States and other Western countries. This convergence of interests generates tensions that require a coordinated response from NATO allies and their partners. From the American perspective, Russia could be seen as a "Chinese Canada" in the Arctic context, given its vast territorial reach in the region and its strategic supply of essential resources that align with China's interests in polar infrastructure and logistics. This growing partnership between Russia and China in the Arctic intensifies competition over maritime routes and the exploitation of natural resources, directly challenging the U.S. position in the region. For Washington, cooperation between these powers represents a threat to the stability of the polar frontier and the global geopolitical balance.

Simultaneously, the increasing importance of new Arctic maritime routes, such as the Northern Sea Route, elevates the military significance of the region in terms of controlling strategic infrastructure and global logistical pathways, particularly concerning Greenland (Bankes & Koivurova, 2013). According to Emmerson (2010), these routes could significantly reshape international maritime trade, offering logistical advantages to countries that control their access. However, the militarization of these areas creates a security dilemma, as discussed by Buzan et al. (1998), since the expansion of military capabilities in the region may lead to escalating tensions among rival powers.

## DIPLOMATIC DIMENSION

From a diplomatic perspective, the region is often associated with territorial disputes, as seen in the cases of Greenland and Canada, whose relations with the United States are shaped by both strategic interests and cultural and institutional pressures. Greenland, an autonomous territory of Denmark, is pursuing greater autonomy while remaining dependent on external investments, creating a critical point in diplomatic negotiations. Financial incentives and support for self-determination movements could act as catalysts for a political transition aligning more closely with American interests, especially given the historical attempts by the United States to acquire the island, such as Harry Truman's proposal in 1946 (Dunbar, 1950; Roucek, 1951).

In Canada, the context is more complex due to cultural and institutional barriers that complicate any attempt at integration. Building diplomatic alliances to deepen cooperation in infrastructure, energy,

and security would require not only bilateral negotiations but also the involvement of regional and community actors, given the importance of local autonomy and cultural identities (Archibald, 2006). These negotiations would demand particular care to avoid perceptions of neocolonialism or imperialism, especially in provinces like Québec, where separatist movements could be spurred as a response to perceived tensions.

The so-called "Texas solution" offers an intriguing parallel in the Arctic context. This concept refers to the annexation of Texas by the United States in the 19th century, a process that involved supporting local independence movements and eventual integration as a U.S. state. Applied to Greenland or strategic Canadian provinces such as Québec, or even in encouraging greater autonomy in Arctic regions like Nunavut, this hypothetical approach would imply the veiled or explicit support of the United States for local independence efforts, culminating in a plebiscite to decide on integration. While the "Texas solution" carries diplomatic risks and potential international repercussions, it aligns with historical precedents and the logic of self-determination, as seen in other cases of U.S. territorial expansion (Richards Jr, 2016).

In the diplomatic arena, the Arctic is often described as a space of "coopetition," where collaboration and rivalry coexist. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) governs territorial claims but does not resolve disputes such as those between Russia and the United States regarding the North Pole. In this context, peaceful dispute resolution initiatives would follow a logic of mutual gains, with the Arctic Council playing a central role in mediation (Paradise et al., 2020; Welch, 2020). However, the political and economic weight of actors like the United States often reshapes regional dynamics, polarizing interests among Arctic nations and external stakeholders. Political independence movements, driven by identity and economic issues, intertwine with U.S. diplomatic efforts to maintain influence in the region (Zandee & Kruijver, 2020; Berbrick, 2020).

The Arctic, as a diplomatic theater where historical and contemporary strategies shape its governance, reflects the convergence of strategic interests, territorial sovereignty, and local aspirations for greater autonomy (Dunbar, 1950; Coates & Morrison, 2008; Grydehøj, 2021). Solutions like the "Texas solution" reveal how historical precedents can be reapplied, even in a more complex and interconnected global context.

## ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The economic exploitation of the Arctic has gained prominence in the development strategies of global powers. Climate change, by reducing the extent of ice caps, has made the extraction of mineral and energy resources that were previously inaccessible feasible. Greenland, for instance, holds significant reserves of rare earth elements essential for green technologies and advanced communication systems. The island's position between European and North American markets enhances its integration into global supply chains (Nielsen, 2013). Conversely, the competition for rights to exploit these resources has heightened tensions among Arctic nations, including Russia, Canada, Norway, and the United States.

Canada, with vast reserves of oil, gas, and minerals, holds a significant role in the Arctic economy. The country's northern region has the potential to become an operational hub for resource extraction and transportation. From the perspective of territorial governance theories, as highlighted by Quillérrou (2020), exploiting these resources requires interstate cooperation to develop infrastructure such as transportation corridors and logistical ports. Although Canada has a history of commercial partnerships with the United States, deeper economic integration may face challenges from political movements advocating for greater economic autonomy.

The potential of Arctic maritime routes, such as the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route, increases the region's strategic value. These new connections shorten transportation between Asian, European, and American markets, reducing logistical costs and boosting international trade (Giguère et al., 2017). However, the opening of these routes demands significant investments in navigation technologies and infrastructure to ensure safe and efficient maritime trade in extreme conditions. This context fosters an environment of economic competition among global powers, all striving to secure dominance over these emerging trade corridors.

Greenland and Canada possess geographic conditions that favor their integration into this globalized economic landscape. However, these conditions come with institutional and social challenges. Indigenous populations in these regions have been advocating for greater involvement in decision-making processes regarding resource exploitation, which directly impacts economic integration projects with the United States (Kolås, 2013). Balancing economic and cultural interests is a key focus of the Arctic Council, which brings together Arctic nations for multilateral negotiations.

The growing Chinese presence in the Arctic also influences the United States' economic calculations regarding Canada and Greenland. Chinese companies have been investing in rare earth mining in Greenland, raising concerns about monopolies over these critical resources. Notably, China views the Arctic as an extension of its Belt and Road Initiative, seeking greater economic influence in the region (Tillman et al., 2018). These developments have prompted the United States to expand its investments in infrastructure and technology to consolidate its presence in the Arctic.

The economic interdependence between the United States, Canada, and Greenland, combined with the Arctic's strategic value, creates a dynamic landscape that requires constant adaptation. Resource exploitation and the utilization of new trade routes not only enhance economic growth opportunities but also intensify competition among global powers. However, the governance of these territories, including considerations of Indigenous rights and environmental challenges, presents barriers that must be addressed for the region's full economic potential to be realized.

## CONCLUSIONS

The transformation of the Arctic into a region of global interest redefines bilateral and multilateral relations, placing the area at the center of economic and security policies. The hypothetical incorporation of Canada and Greenland into the United States, beyond political considerations (such as integrating parliamentary territories into a presidential state) or cultural differences (such as distinct national identities, languages, and legal systems), would face profound military, diplomatic, and economic challenges that would restructure global power dynamics. As a region of growing importance, the Arctic embodies disputes reflecting the interests of major powers. Greenland, with its mineral wealth and strategic location, stands as a valuable asset, while Canada, with its vast energy resources and Arctic territory, represents a critical partner for any global influence strategy.

Climate change accelerates the region's growing importance, as melting polar ice caps facilitate access to resources and maritime routes. Arctic nations face increasing pressure to balance economic exploitation with environmental preservation while managing the expanding influence of external powers, such as China. For the United States, the prospect of integration with Canada and Greenland directly relates to strengthening its economic and strategic position in the Arctic.

The economic interdependence among the three territories presents challenges that go beyond logistics. Greenland, as an autonomous territory, seeks greater economic independence while relying on external investments to develop its infrastructure. In Canada, questions of sovereignty and national identity further complicate economic integration with the United States. These issues reveal that while integration may offer economic advantages, it faces significant institutional and cultural obstacles.

Security also emerges as a critical aspect of this integration analysis. The balance of power theory applies to the Arctic context, where military bases such as Thule in Greenland consolidate U.S. influence and bolster its capacity to respond to global threats. The increasing militarization of the region, driven by nations like Russia and China, intensifies competition and demands strategies that minimize the risks of conflict. Arctic Indigenous populations, in this context, must claim greater political participation and control over local resources, reflecting the challenge of reconciling global and local interests in a context of accelerated economic exploitation. The sustainability of these communities is directly tied to the success of any integration model or international cooperation framework.

The future of relations between the United States, Canada, and Greenland in the Arctic context will be directly linked to the military, diplomatic, and economic assertiveness of a potential second Trump administration. The implications of this approach could significantly impact the strategic ambitions of Russia and China, not only in the Arctic but also in regions such as Ukraine, the Caucasus, Taiwan, and the Panama Canal—a counterpart to the Arctic for the U.S. to establish a 360-degree



navigable system within its envisioned territory. This "Arctic Doctrine" is likely to reinforce a 21st-century geopolitical dynamic marked by the centralization of great powers and territorial expansion movements aimed at redefining the global balance of power.

## REFERENCES

- ARCHER, C. The United States Defence Areas in Greenland. *Cooperation and Conflict*, v. 23, n. 3, p. 123-144, 1988.
- ARCHIBALD, L. *Decolonization and healing: Indigenous experiences in the United States, New Zealand, Australia and Greenland*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2006.
- BAEV, P. K. Threat assessments and strategic objectives in Russia's Arctic policy. *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, v. 32, n. 1, p. 25-40, 2019.
- BANKES, N.; KOIVUROVA, T. (eds.). *The proposed Nordic Saami convention: National and international dimensions of indigenous property rights*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013.
- BERBRICK, W. et al. *Conflict Prevention and Security Cooperation in the Arctic Region: Frameworks of the Future*. US Naval War College, 2020.
- BERTON, P. *The Invasion of Canada: 1812-1813*. Anchor Canada, 2011.
- BORGERSON, S. The coming Arctic boom: As the ice melts, the region heats up. *Foreign Affairs*, v. 92, p. 76, 2013.
- BUZAN, B.; WÆVER, O.; DE WILDE, J. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.
- CHAPNICK, A. *The middle power project: Canada and the founding of the United Nations*. UBC Press, 2011.
- CHARRON, A. Canada, the Arctic, and NORAD: Status quo or new ball game? *International Journal*, v. 70, n. 2, p. 215-231, 2015.
- CNN. Trump, Greenland, Canada, and Panama: Analysis. 2025. Disponível em: <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/01/08/politics/trump-greenland-canada-panama-analysis/index.html>. Acesso em: 13 jan. 2025.
- CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE. *Critical Mineral Resources: The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Role in Research and Analysis*. 5 abr. 2024. Disponível em: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R48005>. Acesso em: 13 jan. 2025.
- CONLEY, H. A.; MELINO, M. *America's Arctic Moment: Great Power Competition in the Arctic to 2050*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2021.
- DODDS, K.; NUTTALL, M. *The Arctic: What Everyone Needs to Know?*. Oxford University Press, 2019.
- DUNBAR, M. J. Greenland during and since the Second World War. *International Journal*, v. 5, n. 2, p. 121-140, 1950.
- EMMERSON, C. (ed.). *The Future History of the Arctic*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2010.
- FOGELSON, N. Greenland: Strategic Base on a Northern Defense Line. *The Journal of Military History*, 1989.
- GAD, U. P.; STRANDSBJERG, J. Conclusion: Sustainability, reconfiguring identity, space, and time. In: *The Politics of Sustainability in the Arctic*. Routledge, p. 242-255, 2018.
- GIGUÈRE, M.-A.; COMTOIS, C.; SLACK, B. Constraints on Canadian Arctic maritime connections. *Case Studies on Transport Policy*, v. 5, n. 2, p. 355-366, 2017.

- GRANATSTEIN, J. L.; HILLMER, N. For Better or for Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s. [S.l.: s.n.], 1991.
- HARMSSEN, P. Fury and Ice: Greenland, the United States and Germany in World War II. 2024.
- HENRIKSEN, A.; RAHBEK-CLEMMENSEN, J. The Greenland card: Prospects for and barriers to Danish Arctic diplomacy in Washington. Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook, v. 1, p. 75-98, 2017.
- KEIL, K.; KNECHT, S. (eds.). Governing Arctic Change: Global Perspectives. Springer, 2016.
- KOLÅS, Å. Indigenous rights, sovereignty and resource governance in the Arctic. Strategic Analysis, v. 37, n. 4, p. 499-504, 2013.
- LAJEUNESSE, A.; WHITNEY LACKENBAUER, P.; MANICOM, J.; LASSERRE, F. China's Arctic ambitions and what they mean for Canada. University of Calgary Press, 2018.
- LANTEIGNE, M. China's Emerging Role in the Arctic: Economics and Institutions. Reykjavík: Northern Research Forum, 2017. ISBN 978-9935-23-069-0.
- LANTEIGNE, M. Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction. Routledge, 2019.
- LOS ANGELES TIMES. Column: Trump wants to grab control of Greenland, Canada, and the Panama Canal. He's already bungled it. 2025. Disponível em: <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2025-01-13/column-trump-wants-to-grab-control-of-greenland-and-canada-and-the-panama-canal-hes-already-bungled-it>. Acesso em: 13 jan. 2025.
- MACKINDER, H. J. The Geographical Pivot of History. The Geographical Journal, 1904.
- MAHAN, A. T. The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783. Read Books Ltd., 2011.
- MARTIN-NIELSEN, J. The other cold war: The United States and Greenland's ice sheet environment, 1948–1966. Journal of Historical Geography, v. 38, n. 1, p. 69-80, 2012.
- MOHR, J. China in the Arctic and the Case of Greenland. In: Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: The High North Between Cooperation and Confrontation. p. 113-129, 2020.
- NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA. Energy and Natural Resources in Canada. 2025. Disponível em: <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca>. Acesso em: 13 jan. 2025.
- NIELSEN, K. H. Transforming Greenland: Imperial formations in the cold war. New Global Studies, v. 7, n. 2, p. 129-154, 2013.
- ØSTHAGEN, A. Coastguards and Ocean Politics in the Arctic. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.
- PARADIS, M.; PARKER, R. D.; JAMES, P. Predicting the North: sovereignty and the Canadian brand in the Arctic. In: Canada, Nation Branding and Domestic Politics. Routledge, p. 63-82, 2020.
- PEZARD, S. et al. China's Strategy and Activities in the Arctic. Rand Corporation, 2022.
- QUILLÉROU, E. et al. The Arctic: Opportunities, Concerns and Challenges. Scientific Fact Sheets of the Ocean & Climate Platform, p. 73-87, 2020.
- RAHBEK-CLEMMENSEN, J. When Do Ideas of an Arctic Treaty Become Prominent in Arctic Governance Debates? Arctic, v. 72, n. 2, p. 116-130, 2019.
- RAHBEK-CLEMMENSEN, J.; THOMASEN, G. How has Arctic coastal state cooperation affected the Arctic Council? Marine Policy, v. 122, p. 104239, 2020.
- RICHARDS JR, T. W. The Texas Moment: Breakaway Republics and Contested Sovereignty in North America, 1836-1846. Temple University, 2016.
- ROUCEK, J. S. The geopolitics of Greenland. Journal of Geography, v. 50, n. 6, p. 239-246, 1951.
- SALE, R.; POTAPOV, E. The Scramble for the Arctic: Ownership, Exploitation and Conflict in the Far North. Frances Lincoln, 2010.

SØRENSEN, C. T. N. The evolving role of the EU in intensifying great power politics in the Arctic–potential implications for EU-China relations. In: *China-EU Relations in a New Era of Global Transformation*. Routledge, p. 152-169, 2021.

STANLEY, G. F. G. The American Invasion of Canada 1775–1776: A Strategic Overview. In: *Swords and Covenants*, p. 19-41, 2021.

STATISTICS CANADA. Population and dwelling counts: Canada, provinces and territories, and census subdivisions (municipalities). 2025. Disponível em: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810000202>. Acesso em: 13 jan. 2025.

STATISTICS GREENLAND. Greenland in Figures. 2025. Disponível em: <https://stat.gl>. Acesso em: 13 jan. 2025.

STEPHANSON, A. *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right*. Hill and Wang, 1996.

STEPHENSON, S. R.; SMITH, L. C. Influence of climate model variability on projected Arctic shipping futures. *Earth's Future*, v. 3, n. 11, p. 331-343, 2015.

TAYLOR, A. *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies*. Knopf, 2010.

TILLMAN, H.; YANG, J.; NIELSSON, E. T. The polar silk road: China's new frontier of international cooperation. *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, v. 4, n. 3, p. 345-362, 2018.

US CENSUS BUREAU. Data Profiles. 2025. Disponível em: <https://www.census.gov/data.html>. Acesso em: 13 jan. 2025.

WALTZ, K. N. *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw-Hill, 1979.

WEBER, J. Limited cooperation or upcoming alliance? Russia, China and the Arctic. In: *Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: The High North Between Cooperation and Confrontation*. p. 345-361, 2020.

WEEKS, W. E. *Building the Continental Empire: American Expansion from the Revolution to the Civil War*. Ivan R. Dee, 1997.

WEIGERT, H. W. Iceland, Greenland and the United States. *Foreign Affairs*, v. 23, n. 1, p. 112-122, 1944.

WELCH, D. A. *The Arctic and Geopolitics*. Springer International Publishing, 2020.

WOOD, G. S. *The American Revolution: A History*. Modern Library, 2005.

WORLD BANK. World Development Indicators: GDP Data. 2025. Disponível em: <https://data.worldbank.org>. Acesso em: 13 jan. 2025.

YOUNG, O. R. *Arctic Politics: Conflict and Cooperation in the Circumpolar North*. Dartmouth College Press, 2000.

ZANDEE, D.; KRUIJVER, K.; STOETMAN, A. *The Future of Arctic Security*. Clingendael Report, 2020-04.

### Author's Affiliation

Ugeda, L. - University of Brasília, Brasília (DF), Brazil.

Sanches, K. - University of Coimbra, Portugal.

### Authors' Contribution

Ugeda, L. - The author contributed to the elaboration, realization and manipulation of the data and writing  
Sanches, K. - The author contributed to the elaboration, realization and manipulation of the data and writing

### Editors in Charge

Alexandra Maria Oliveira  
Alexandre Queiroz Pereira