

Apprendre à oser



Geopolitical shifts & Global consequences

Excerpt from the course
MBA, September & October 2025
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PART I - The granted necessity of geopolitics

If you don't go to geopolitics, they will anyways reach you...

PART II - Geopolitical concepts

1. Schools of thoughts
2. The map always talks
 - 2.1. Land-locked territories
 - 2.2. Insularity
 - 2.3. Quest for resources
 - 2.4. Borders
 - 2.5. Water
 - 2.6. Identity
3. Define a Corporate foreign policy

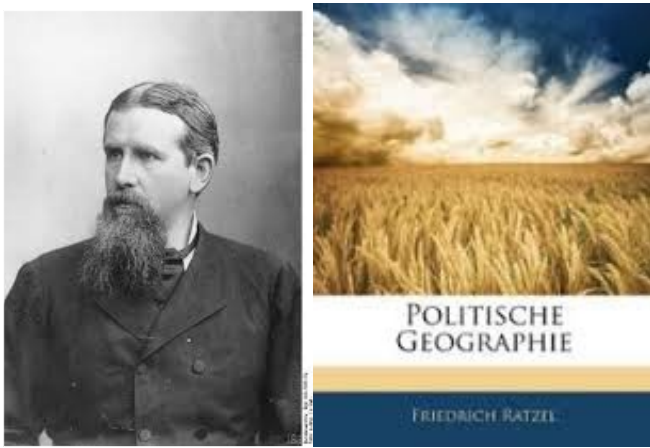
PART III - Focus on geopolitical hotspots... and Case studies

1. Arctic, the new big game
2. Doomed energetic Russia
3. Turkey's dilemmas
4. KSA and the UAE – a new paradigm
5. China's «fenfa youwei»
6. The Global South

*According to elite journals of opinion, the future of foreign affairs mainly rests on **ideas**: the moral impetus for **humanitarian intervention**, the **various theories** governing exchange rates and debt rebalancing necessary to fix Europe, the rise of **cosmopolitanism** alongside with the stubborn vibrancy of **nationalism** in East Asia and so on. In other words, the world future can be engineered and defined based on doctoral theses. And to a certain degree this may be true. As the 20th century showed us, **ideologies** – whether communism, fascism or humanism – matter and matter greatly.*

But there is another truth: The reality of large, impersonal forces like geography and the environment that also help to determine the future of human events.

Robert D. Kaplan, Chief Geopolitical Analyst, Stratfor
Ranked Among the Top Global Thinkers by Foreign Policy magazine



German Old School

Friedrich Ratzel (1844 – 1904)

Gen. Karl Haushofer (1869 – 1946)

Geographer: Cities and cultures of North America

Plants the seeds of environmental determinism and political geography →
«**Organic Theory**», i.e.

Highly populated countries, not only hold the right to spread out, but must take more land as «nourishment» of their people


Fertilization of other cultures. Justified colonialism.

Organic theory (not political but nationalist) → Lebensraum → twisted by Hitler
→ World War II.

Karl Haushofer later became leader of German school: « ***the duty to safeguard the right to the soil, to the land in the widest sense, not only the land within the frontiers of the Reich, but the right to the more extensive Volk and cultural lands*** ». Haushofer took up the Heartland Theory from Halford Mackinder.

*«Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;
Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island;
Who rules the World Island commands the World.»*





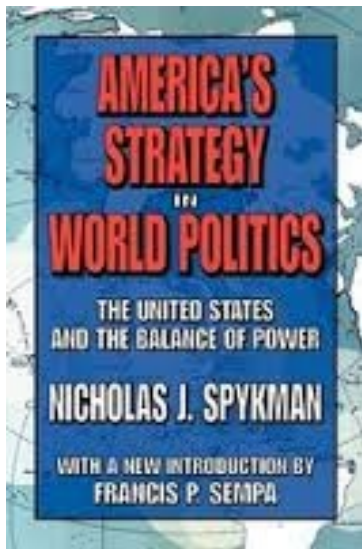
*Who controls the food supply
controls the people;
who controls the energy
can control whole continents;
who controls the money
can control the world.*

Henry Kissinger, 1973

An advocate of a pragmatic approach to geopolitics known as Realpolitik

www.thrivemovement.com

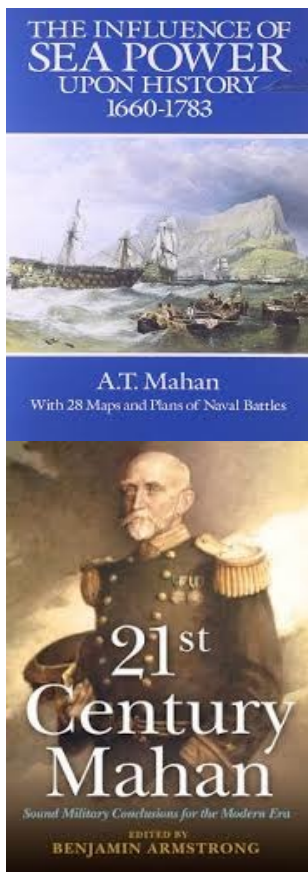
Major publications among a dozen «Diplomacy» (1994), «World Order» (2014) and «The age of AI: And our Human Future» with Eric Schmitt & Daniel Huttenlocher (2021)



American journalist, Professor at Yale. One of the founders of Geopolitics in the USA. To him **geopolitics is the planning of the security policy of a country in terms of its geographical factors**. He described the maritime fringe of a country or continent ; in particular the edges of the Eurasian continent. Spykman thought that the **Rimland**, the strip of coastal land that encircles Eurasia, is more important than the Heartland for the control of the Eurasian continent. Spykman's vision is at the base of «**containment politics**». **Sanctions** are the new pattern

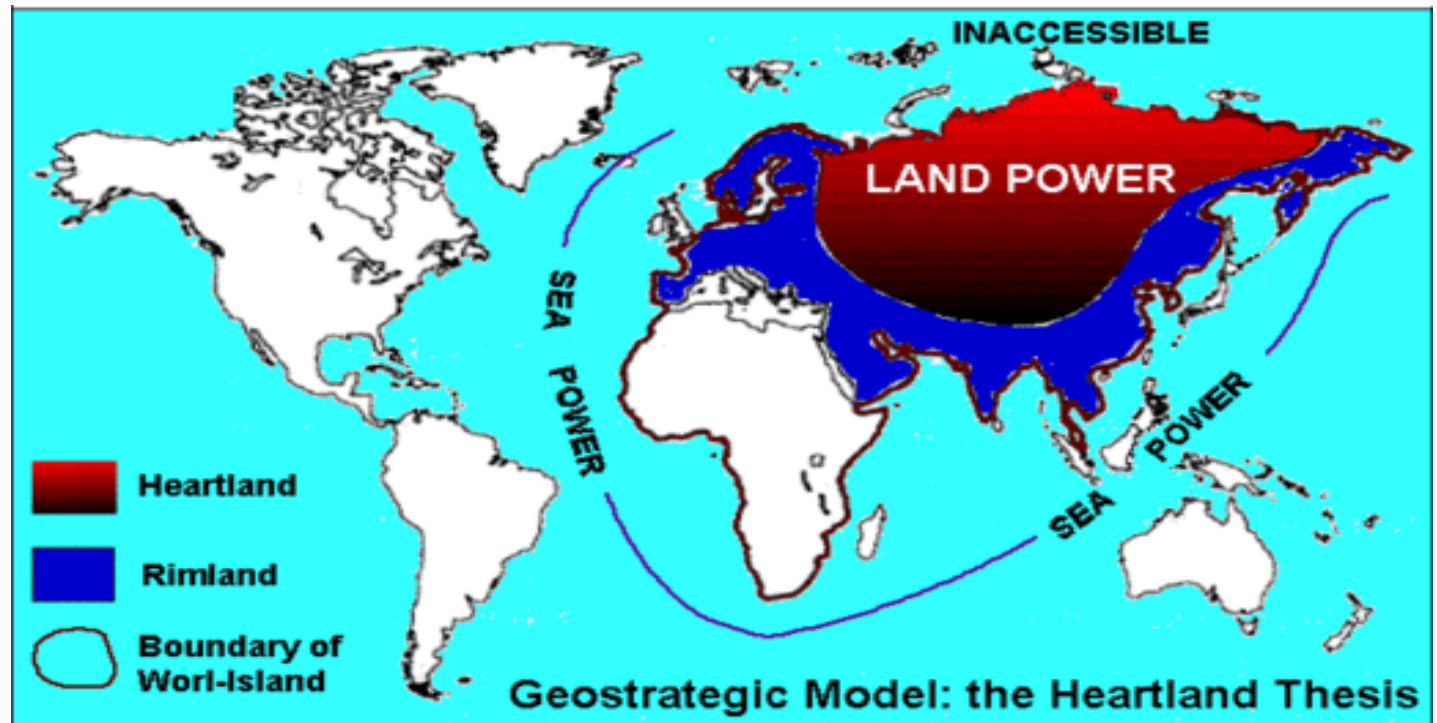
1893 – 1943



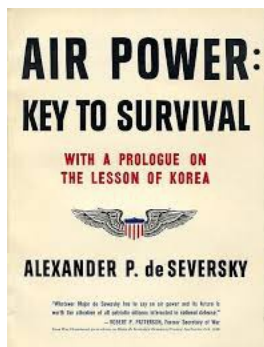


Admiral Alfred T. **Mahan (1840 - 1914)**. His concept of «sea power» was based on the idea that **countries with greater naval power will have greater worldwide impact.**

The concept had an enormous influence in shaping the strategic thoughts of navies in the USA, Germany, Japan and Britain, ultimately with USSR and now China. His ideas still permeate the US Navy Doctrine. In 1902, he was the 1st one to refer to the «Middle East».



Airpower to become the dominant arm of Military power



Geopolitics is the old **Great Game*** :
Russia vs Britain in Afghanistan, Iran and other neighboring territories...
Sounds familiar today?



* The 1901 novel *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling, made the term popular and introduced the new implication of great power rivalry

Some contemporary geopoliticians / thinkers

Yves Lacoste, Gérard Chaliand, F. Thual, Dominique Moïsi...
Institutes: IFG, IFRI, HEIP, IRIS...

Robert Kaplan, FP May 2009 «The revenge of geography»

Joseph Nye «**Soft power**: the means to success in world politics»

Gene Sharp, «From Dictatorship to Democracy». **The politics of non-violent action**. Film: How to start a revolution

Samuel Huntington, consequence of end of Cold war: the controversial «**The Clash of Civilizations**»

George Kennan articulated the American geopolitical strategy of containment. See also Henry Kissinger

Zbigniew Brzezinski: «The Grand Chessboard: American primacy and its geostrategic imperatives»

Saul B. Cohen: demise of bipolar world. Globalization and new tech favor accommodation. Shatterbelts = enormous political volatility (ME); Gateways = points of entry into autonomous heartlands (East E., Central Asia)

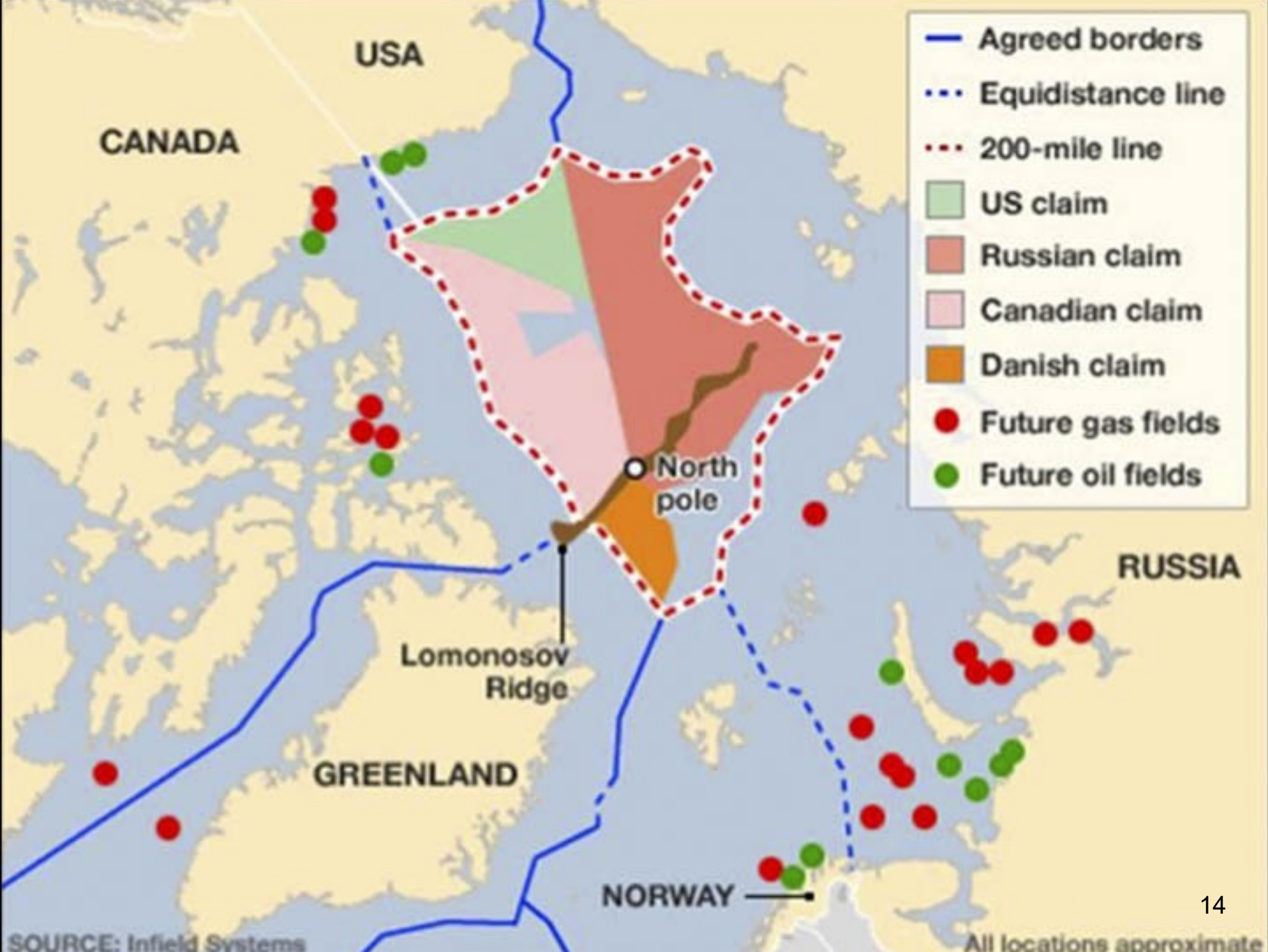
GEOPOLITICAL CONCEPTS

The map always talks...
History & Geography
Identities

“History doesn’t repeat itself but it often rhymes.” **Mark Twain**


The Arctic


**A CONCENTRATION OF
GEOPOLITICAL HOTSPOTS**




The Arctic and Bordering Nations

Selected natural resources:

 Important retreat areas for female polar bears and their offspring


 100% proved oil/gas reserves

 Test drilling

 Oil and gas production

 Gold

 Lead


 Copper

 Silver

 Zinc

 Tin

 Iron

 Diamonds

Click the buttons for additional information!

Arctic Oil and Gas Reserves

90 billion barrels of oil or 47 billion m3 of natural gas or

13% **30%**

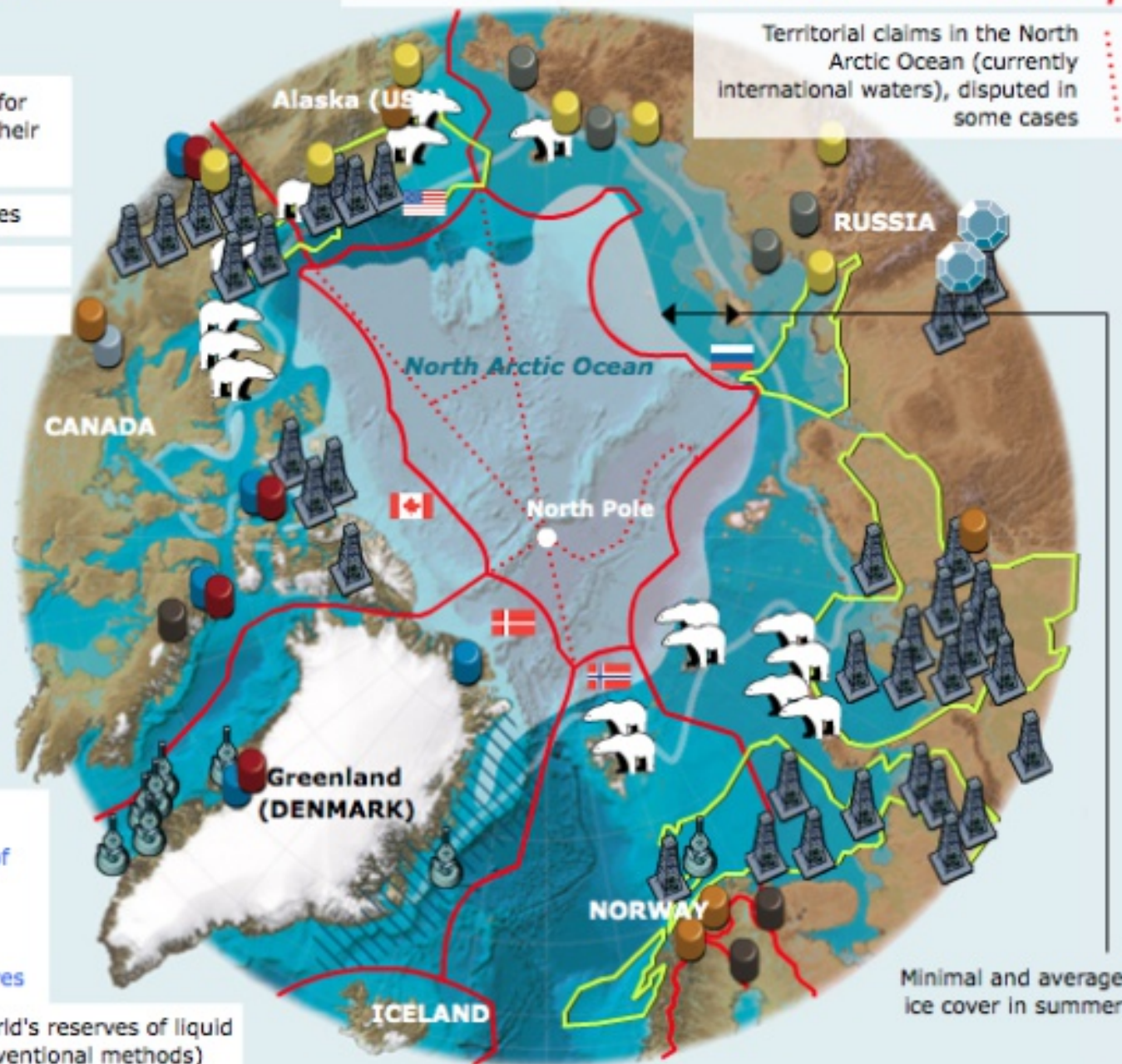
of world reserves of world reserves

In addition, close to 20% of the world's reserves of liquid gas (so far unextractable using conventional methods)

Estimate: USGS

Current national borders and 200 sea mile zone borders

Territorial claims in the North Arctic Ocean (currently international waters), disputed in some cases



Third usual source of conflict: the people



Arctic open for commerce

As ice melts, a wide range of activities increase

Shipping, oil and gas exploration, tourism – all could become more accessible as thick ice recedes

Potential oil and gas fields

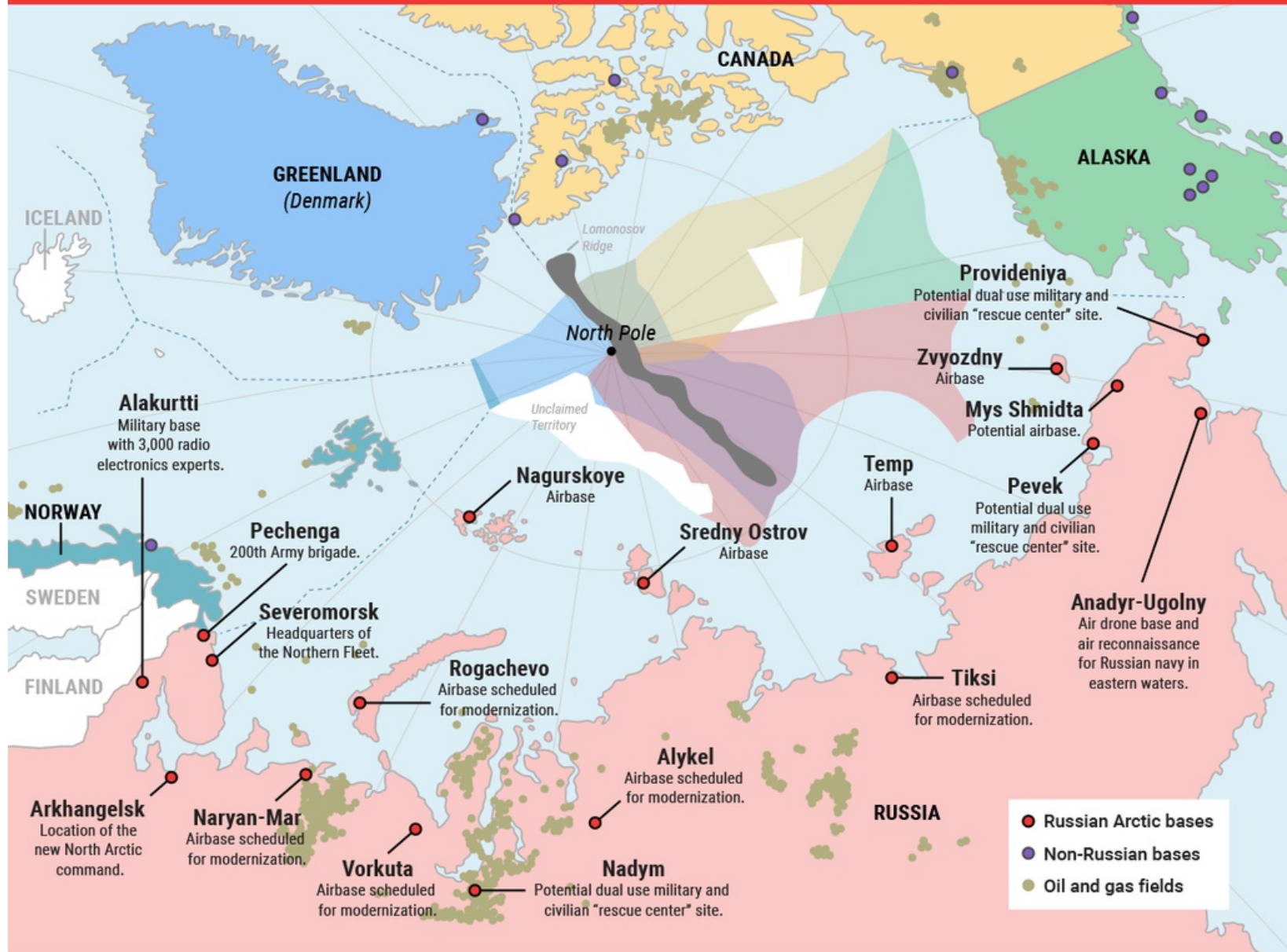
Extent of arctic sea ice, 2012



Well, if that wasn't meant as a symbol...



RUSSIA'S MILITARIZATION OF THE ARCTIC



SOURCES: The Heritage Foundation, TASS, Sputnik News, RT, USNI News, The Moscow Times, Associated Air Charter, Barents Observer, Council on Foreign Relations, The Economist.

China's Arctic Interests

Greenland, one of the world's least accessible places, is looking to upgrade three airports in an effort to open itself up to affordable flights bearing tourists, repatriates and immigrants. The United States, warning that China uses its economic influence to establish a military presence, sees this as an opportunity for China to militarize much too close for comfort.

U.S. interests in Greenland:

- Keeping China out of its backyard
- Helping Greenland gain independence from Denmark

Greenland
AREA
840,000
sq miles
80 percent of Greenland is undeveloped



CHINA COMMUNICATIONS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

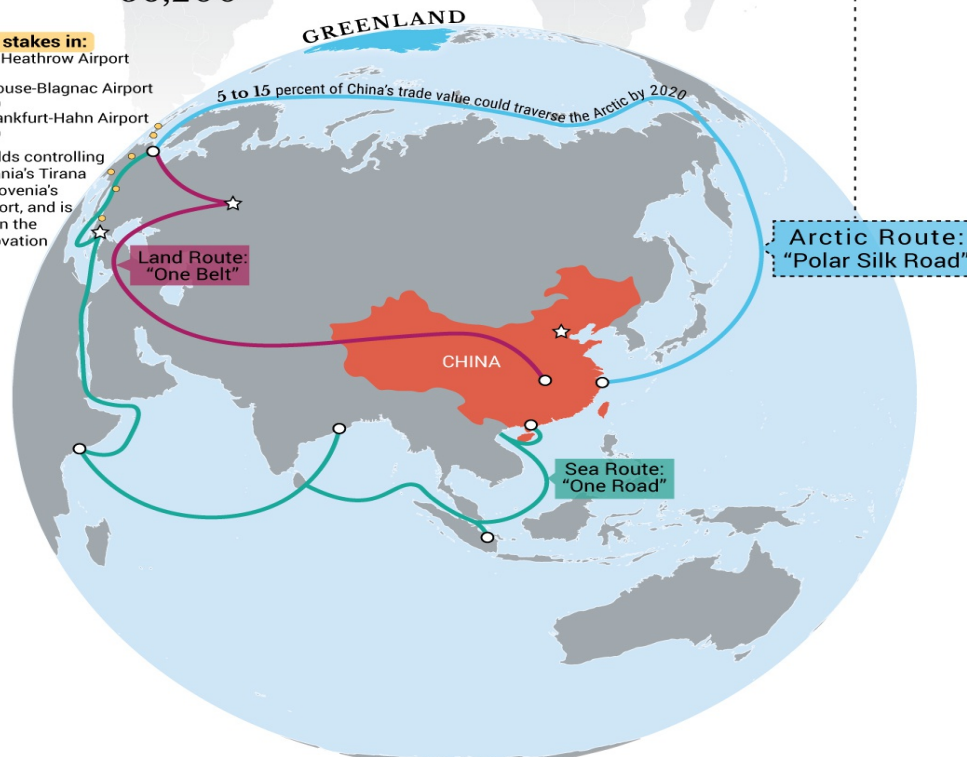
CCCC, one of the world's biggest companies, is bidding to construct Greenland's new airports.

In 2017, CCCC signed contracts for overseas infrastructure construction projects worth a total of \$32 billion.

China owns stakes in:

- U.K.'s London Heathrow Airport (9.5 percent)
- France's Toulouse-Blagnac Airport (49.9 percent)
- Germany's Frankfurt-Hahn Airport (82.5 percent)

China also holds controlling stakes in Albania's Tirana Airport and Slovenia's Ljubljana Airport, and is participating in the \$1 billion renovation of the U.K.'s Manchester Airport.

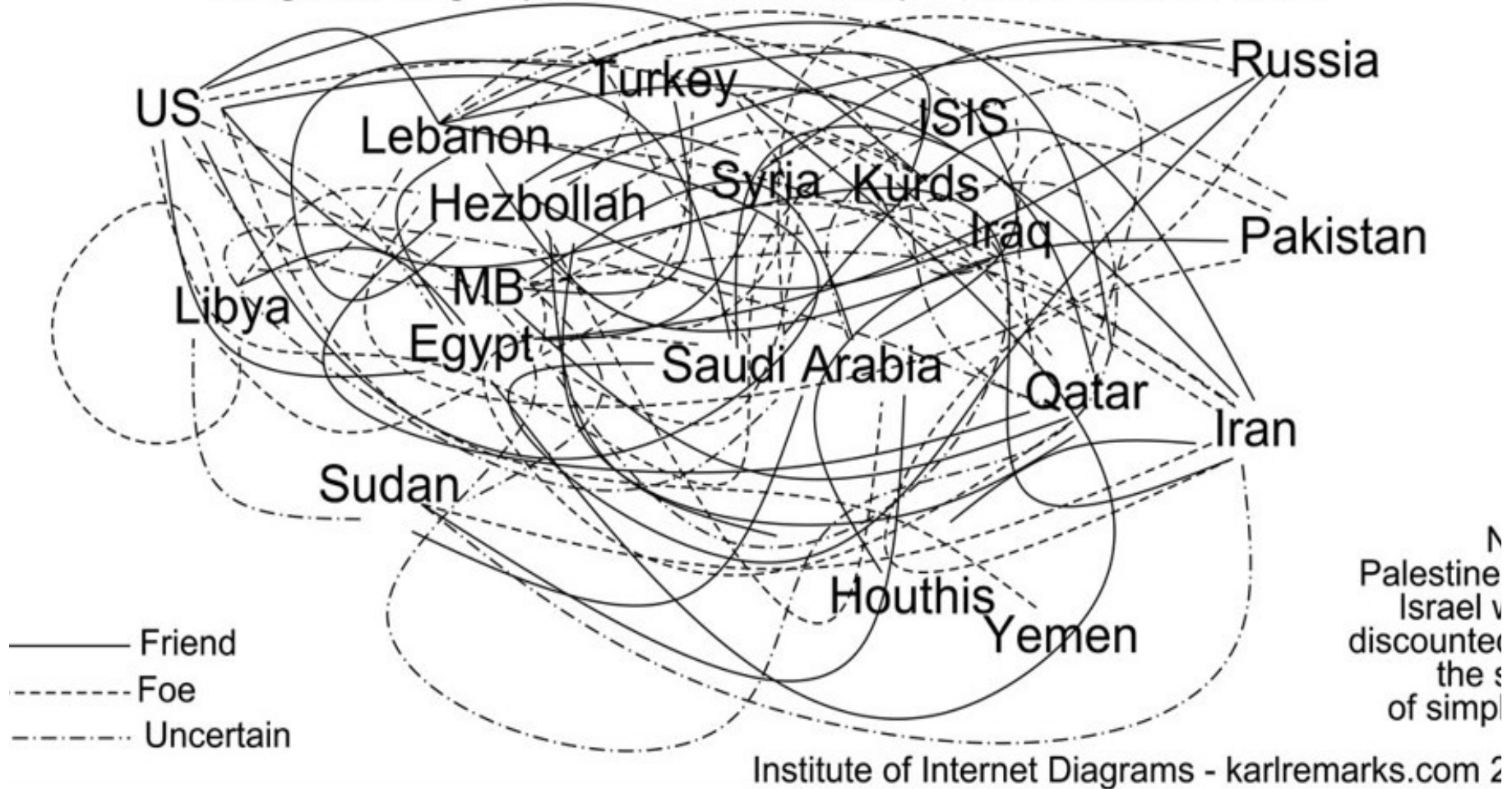




19 July 2018
Putin warns NATO of « consequences »
against closer ties with Ukraine & Georgia

Understand the Middle East

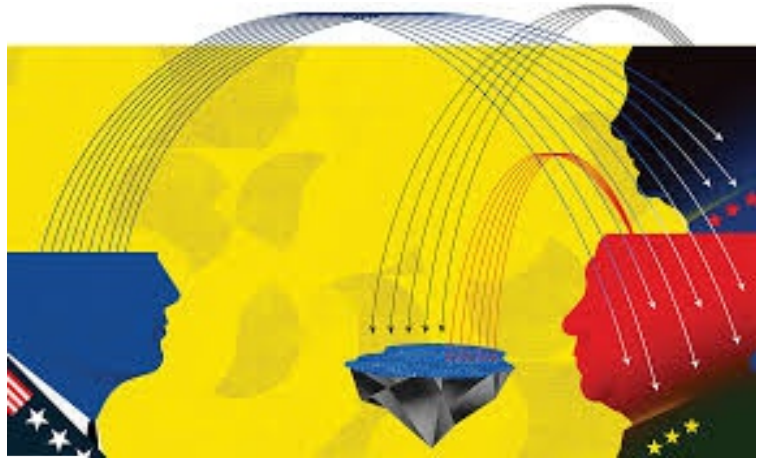
Diagram of geopolitical relationships in the Middle East





Is China the new global deal broker?

Is war between China and the US inevitable?



*“I am struck by how we have lost the trust of the
global South”*

President E. Macron – February 2023



The next superpower?



Geopolitics of climate change – the next chapter





ANOTHER CHAPTER IN HUMAN HISTORY: DEMOGRAPHICS

