

## **Greenland – The realm in focus**

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As the sea ice continues melting the way of looking the planet has started to change. More and more scientists, politicians and military personnel have changed their point of view. It seems like they look the planet as a globe not as a map any longer.

The present angle is more from the top of the world. A new Ocean, the seventh of the oceans in the world, is opening. New seaways even for heavy carriers cause new ways of thinking. From the top of the world you see how close the two traditional superpowers the US and Russia are to each other.

It is too the new perspective which has given Greenland a new nickname ‘the realm in focus.’

Just few years ago Greenland was just a white spot out-of-the-way.

Thanks to the new situation of the presence of climate change and the hunger for oil, gas and minerals Greenland is in focus between continents and superpowers today. That’s why it is ironically that China, the old realm in focus after has been knocking for years on the door to the Arctic Council got a status as observer in the council last month.

The old realm in focus has recognized the new geographical reality and has acted after this.

Probably Greenland is on its way to be a superpower in the Arctic. Not because of military matter. Not because of its economy. Just because of its extent and its admission to riches of resources, both on and offshore.

In the beginning of 1990’s I stayed on Ellesmere Island for a couple of weeks in august. I was invited by the park authorities. On my way up north to Tanquary Fiord I stopped in Qaussuitsoq and Eureka and saw the sea ice still was intact. While flying here and there on the island with Ken Boreks twin otter we too stopped at Ward Hunt Island, probably the northernmost place of the Northamerican continent and the last basecamp for lots of NorthPole-freaks. There the sea ice seemed not to be in attack of the temperature at that time. So it was a surprise to see photos yesterday which shows open water among the coasts of Ward Hunt Island.

I think that it is of extreme importance that people all around the world have real access to information about the extremely serious situation, not only for us in the Arctic but for the whole planet.

Even if Greenland is on its way to become superpower in the Arctic, we the people in the Arctic have limited resources to initiate campaigns like this workshop. Therefore we are grateful to know that we have devoted friends abroad, who shares our views and devote their lives and talents for the common good, and especially for our cause.

The conventional wisdom in international relations theory is that small states or small isolated societies have small interests.

According to this conventional wisdom, small states should concentrate their limited efforts on a single issue and about their closest environment.

This model may have been a truth for Greenland once. I doubt that it is true any longer.

Some larger states or trade blocks of larger states may perhaps afford to isolate themselves.

Greenland and the Arctic as well, on the other hand, cannot afford to isolate themselves and build barriers towards the rest of the world. We cannot decrease or cut down international relations.

What we have built up is based on the ambition to be free and to make use of that freedom. Today we are free as legal members of the international society and we are only limited by our own weakness.

So do not listen only to those who claim we are too small to have international aspirations. And that we are too small to make an impact.

Can any nation not be able to decide its own faith because it is too small?

Well, if we believe that we are too small and insignificant then we will quickly become small and insignificant.

Control over the fishing and hunting resources was the most important factor in building the new Greenland. That's why it is our obligation to secure that we people of the Arctic are the most important part in making decisions in questions about exploitation and production of the oil-, gas- and mineral resources in our region within the exclusive economic zone.

Outside the EEZ it is my idea which I have suggested both the Nordic Council and West Nordic Council to invite all nations with coastline to the Arctic Ocean to establish a joint committee for the 'Ocean'.

The committee will be the authority to make decisions on all issues and activities in the Arctic Ocean, the Arctic Ocean Council.

The council should make decisions about the utilization of both the living- and natural resources.

The council should make decisions about shipping lanes in the ocean. The budget for the council should be a common responsibility for all coast states.

Interest in the Arctic, both the general public, the media and Arctic and non-Arctic nations continues to grow.

Until recently, the resources of the Arctic were deemed to be too difficult and expensive to develop (to be utilized?). But the increasing access and high energy and mineral prices, the wealth of the Arctic is now being intensely discovered, explored and developed. This makes energy exploration among the most important and perhaps the most serious issues for Arctic policy moving forward.

Today we are testifying a measured but certain expansion into Arctic lands and waters. This is significant because we the first people (nation?) of the Arctic have a right to benefit from all of our resources, not just energy but the fisheries and marine mammals on which we depend for our nutrition and livelihoods.

We are the inhabitants. We are to be in the very front of all talks (dialogues?) about exploitation of all resources.

We are at a very critical time in the Arctic right now. We have two paths that we can go down in regards to international relations.

One is a path of competition and conflict, and the other is cooperation and diplomacy. That's why the necessity for the Arctic Ocean Council.

Now in the start of this Millenium, it is about high time to grasp the spirit of the new times.

It is about time to change in depth the relationships between States and former colonies or territories.

As the UN Decade for Indigenous People some 15 years ago or so said it is about time to introduce the policy of "Partnership in Action."

We may be a small society. But we are not too small to care about the environment to secure the biodiversity.

And we are not too small to make an effort.

These efforts as well as active work in international organizations are essential in order to maintain and strengthen the position of Arctic in the world.