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Introduction

In 2004, Gunnar Palsson, Chairman of the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) of the Arctic Council, travelled to Beijing to visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC on behalf of the Council members. He spoke highly of the work of the Arctic Council, especially the leading role it was playing in raising public's awareness of climate change through the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment. The message he was trying to deliver was explicit and straightforward: the Arctic matters to the rest of the world and countries outside the Arctic need to pay attention to the changes in the Arctic. Around 2004, China was the second largest emitter of CO₂ after the United States. Therefore, the Arctic countries were very keen to engage China in addressing climate change.

In 2013, together with Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Italy and India, China was granted the formal observer status by the Arctic Council. The representatives from the United States and the Nordic countries played a very important role in the approving process. This move could be considered as an important step for the United States and Europe to succeed in persuading the Chinese government to make further commitments to addressing climate change.

In 2015, the Chinese government took more proactive measures to promote global climate governance, making a historic contribution to the Paris Agreement on post-2020 global cooperation on climate change. In 2016, China officially ratified the Paris Agreement. The Chinese government steadfastly supported the Paris Agreement, even as

the Trump administration of the United States set significant obstacles to global climate governance. In September 2020, Chinese leaders announced at the General Debate of the 75th UN General Assembly that China would increase its nationally determined contributions. Since then, the Chinese government has put forward more ambitious goals like reducing carbon dioxide emissions, developing non-fossil fuels and increasing forest stock and has set a timetable for achieving carbon peaking and carbon neutrality. China is shouldering more responsibilities in addressing the challenges of climate change and loss of biodiversity by fulfilling its international commitments.

In the white paper “China’s Arctic Policy” released in 2018, the Chinese government has also stated its position on addressing climate change issues related to the Arctic more clearly. “Addressing climate change in the Arctic is an important part of global climate governance. China consistently takes the issue of climate change seriously. It has included measures to deal with climate change such as Nationally Determined Contributions in its overall national development agenda, and has made significant contributions to the conclusion of the Paris Agreement.” In the white paper, the Chinese government reiterated its contributions and responsibilities to climate change related to the Arctic. China’s emission reduction measures have a positive impact on the climatic and ecological environment of the Arctic. Chinese scientific teams have done their best to study on evaluating the interaction between the Arctic and global climate change, predicting potential risks posed by future climate change to the Arctic’s natural resources and ecological environment, and advancing Arctic cryospheric sciences. Chinese government has raised the public’s awareness of the Arctic issues related to climate change through strengthening publicity and education.

In retrospect of the historical process we can draw the following conclusion: since 2004, the Arctic Council has been lobbying big countries outside the Arctic to pay attention to changes in the Arctic for example, the loss of biodiversity, caused by climate change and greenhouse gas emission. In the case of lobbying China, such diplomatic effort has been proven fruitful. It is a remarkable achievement for both the Arctic countries and China, as well as improving the global

mechanism to address climate change.

As a non-Arctic state and globally important economy, will China be a positive contributor or a burden to Arctic governance? In recent years, the world has paid increasingly great attention to China's engagement in Arctic affairs.

The Arctic is a unique region that is vulnerable to global climate change and increasing human activities. Therefore, it needs joint protection by the international society. Collaboration between Arctic and non-Arctic states is part of Arctic cooperation, either bilaterally or within the frameworks of regional fora and international organizations, on scientific research, environmental protection, and sustainable development. Incorporating non-Arctic states into the Arctic Council is determined by the needs of Arctic governance and the trends of world development. Moreover, important non-Arctic states can help to provide the public goods necessary for Arctic governance, which can play a direct role in fulfilling the tasks of governance.

Arctic and non-Arctic states are partners rather than competitors. To enhance cooperation, Arctic and non-Arctic states should strengthen communication, increase mutual understanding and trust and act on common interests. Recognizing and respecting each other's rights constitutes the legal basis for cooperation between Arctic and non-Arctic states. The Arctic states hold sovereignty and enjoy sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic region, while non-Arctic states enjoy relevant rights of navigation and scientific research. The Arctic is a key region for global cooperation to address climate change and biodiversity loss. Cooperation between Arctic and non-Arctic States is essential for the accumulation of scientific knowledge and the establishment of Arctic observing systems. Relations between Arctic and non-Arctic States should focus on addressing global challenges such as climate change and the development of green economy in Arctic. A cooperative mindset that upholds respect for international law, multilateralism and globalization is the institutional basis for cooperation between Arctic and non-Arctic States. Arctic states need to be more open and inclusive to international cooperation. The participation of non-Arctic countries in Arctic affairs should be more balanced in terms of scientific contribution

and benefit sharing. The legacy of the cold war and geopolitics in the region continues to have a negative impact on the realization of Arctic governance goals. The tension between NATO and Russia will not disappear in the short term. The engagement of non-Arctic countries in Arctic affairs needs to help all parties to find common interests, promote peace, reduce conflict and jointly address major challenges such as climate change.

China is highly valued by some Arctic states for its capital, market and capabilities in infrastructure construction. The international scientific community regards Chinese polar scientists as an important contingent in addressing polar scientific conundrums. Since Arctic governance needs a system involving land-based, marine, aerial and space technologies to monitor environmental changes, China is exactly one of the few countries equipped with those technological systems needed to provide public goods for arctic science and economic activities.

While China is enjoying the rights of participating in Arctic affairs and acquiring relevant rights according to the existing international laws, it should also assume the global responsibility of keeping peace and maintaining environmentally friendly, sustainable development in the Arctic region. Only a peaceful Arctic guarantees environmental and economic benefits to China. Therefore, respecting the sovereignty of the Arctic states is the legal basis for China to view the current international order in the Arctic. In the process of China's participation in Arctic affairs and interaction with the Arctic countries, China should make and demonstrate its contributions to the fields of Arctic research and environmental protection to guide the international community to understand its Arctic policy as moving from "benefits oriented" to "contributions oriented" and to create a favorable image in the international community. Besides realizing win-win bilateral interests, China should express its humanitarian and environmental concerns in the host countries in connection with investment and cooperation, especially the concerns shared by the indigenous people.

2013 was a remarkable year for China's participation in the Arctic affairs. In addition to being granted the formal observer status

by the Arctic Council, Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was first proposed by the government in 2013. In the same year, Chinese shipping company Cosco's vessel Yongsheng conducted the country's first commercial trial voyage to the Arctic Ocean.

China's Belt and Road Initiative, including the Polar Silk Road proposed by Beijing in a white paper in 2018, is a response to the global economic slump triggered by the financial crisis of 2008. Facing the crisis, Chinese policymakers felt that global economic flows had become stagnant. The US government's response was to pull manufacturing investment back to the U.S. and regain trade advantages through aggressive bilateral trade negotiations. Based on its own development phase, China found that joining and facilitating regional and world economic flows was the best way to deal with the economic downturn. Facilitating regional economic flows and consumption can transfer China's excess manufacturing capacity abroad; and in the meantime, it can also prepare new markets for future prosperity. For China, these economic flows entail goods flows, capital flows, technology flows and the flows of construction capacity. The joint efforts to build a blue economic passage linking East Asia and Europe via the Arctic Ocean is generally in line with the spirit of facilitating global economic flows.

According to its white paper on Arctic, the Chinese government has the willingness to bring opportunities for parties concerned to jointly build a "Polar Silk Road" and facilitate connectivity and sustainable economic and social development of the Arctic. It encourages its enterprises to participate in the infrastructure construction for the Arctic sea routes and conduct commercial trial voyages in accordance with the law to pave the way for their regularized commercial operations. China stands for steadily advancing international cooperation on the Arctic. It has worked to strengthen such cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative according to the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits and emphasized policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and closer people-to-people ties. Concrete cooperation steps include coordinating development strategies with the Arctic States, encouraging joint efforts to build the Arctic sea routes, enhancing Arctic digital

connectivity, and building a global infrastructure network.

The above historical review is based on my personal observation close to the facts and events. In the past twelve years, as a researcher and leader of a Chinese think tank, I have been very fortunate to have witnessed and contributed to the important interaction between China and the Arctic. Through cooperation and exchanges, I get to know many far-sighted scholars, smart diplomats, and outstanding businessmen. Getting acquainted with them has given me a broader understanding of the planet we live in and the times we are in now. This historical process is very unusual whether it is viewed in the context of dealing with global challenges or from the perspective of China's relationship with the world.

In the process of participating in the exchanges between China and the Arctic countries, I have recorded my observations and thoughts. My observation mainly covers the following questions: What is the uniqueness and development logic of Arctic affairs in the global order? What are the interests and responsibilities of non-Arctic states participating in Arctic affairs? What are the mechanisms and characteristics of the interaction between non-Arctic states and Arctic states? What important motivations does China's Arctic policy reflect on China's participation in Arctic affairs? How will China's economic cooperation with the Arctic countries develop under the framework of the Polar Silk Road? China has carried out international cooperation in many Arctic-related fields. What are the experiences and models of these international cooperation? My thinking and observations are shared in this book on these above issues.

As to participating in many academic activities on Arctic governance, as a Chinese scholar, I have had many opportunities to present my views at international conferences, and I am honored to have collaborated with excellent scholars from the Arctic countries to publish some papers related to Arctic governance in the past years in Chinese and in English. In this book, I have selected 12 papers. Readers can see the changing process of a Chinese scholar's understanding of the Arctic issues, as well as the process of China's interaction with the world on the Arctic issues. These chapters are divided into four parts. The first part mainly analyzes the

Arctic governance and international relations, including Chapter 1 that discusses the Arctic governance and trends, Chapter 2 that delves into “the relationship between the intra-regional and extra-regional countries in the process of Arctic governance”, and Chapter 3 that explores how expert communities contribute to the Arctic governance systems as knowledge holders and beyond knowledge holders. The second part focuses on discussing “China’s Arctic Policies and Practices”. Chapter 4 is an academic interpretation of the “White Paper on China’s Arctic Policy” issued by the Chinese government in 2018. Chapter 5 provides a preliminary assessment of China’s performance after being accepted as an observer to the Arctic Council. Chapter 6 makes a systematic introduction to China’s polar science and technology system and its reform process. Several chapters in the third part mainly introduce the Polar Silk Road, which are very concerned by the outside world, including Chapter 7 that examines China’s international cooperation within the framework of the Polar Silk Road, Chapter 8 that explores the opportunities and challenges of jointly building of the Polar Silk Road, and Chapter 9 that focuses on the role of Arctic gas in the Sino-Russian political and economic relations. The fourth part introduces the specific areas of international cooperation in the Arctic that China has participated in. I hope these introductions can help readers learn more about the details of China’s international cooperation in Arctic and with the Arctic states, such as the establishment and development of CNARC, an academic cooperation platform between China and Nordic (Chapter 10), international cooperation between China and the Arctic countries in the Bering Sea region (Chapter 11), and technological innovation trends of polar marine equipment and related international cooperation (Chapter 12).

Correct judgments on the Arctic governance system are the basis for us to set Arctic governance goals and implement Arctic governance rules. Chapter 1 is originated from my paper coauthored with Oran R. Young (Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, University of California Santa Barbara) and Andrei Zagorski (Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences). We jointly reviewed the historical conditions under which the international order in Arctic took shape in the 1990s, and

comprehensively analyzed the challenges and demands for Arctic governance. The Arctic in the 2020s has emerged as a critical arena in the global climate emergency and as an area of increasing sensitivity in terms of great power politics. It is pointless to ignore the growing links between the Arctic and the global system and to perpetuate the belief that the currents of great power politics will not spill over to affect the treatment of issues on the Arctic policy agenda. At the same time, this should not blind us to the success of the ongoing efforts to promote international cooperation on specific issues and to the prospect that similar opportunities will continue to arise in the 2020s. This paper treats the “new” Arctic as a zone of peaceful competition in which there are opportunities to cooperate on specific issues, even though the interests of major players diverge. Specific opportunities and the adjustments include developing codes of conduct to avoid armed clashes, responding to climate change, managing commercial shipping, protecting biodiversity, and meshing scientific activities. Opening the Arctic Council to new voices and taking advantage of the Council's convening power to manage the emerging Arctic regime complex while taking steps to protect its distinctive features will enhance the prospects for success in these areas. The necessary adjustments in existing practices that are individually modest but together could make a real difference in addressing Arctic challenges arising in the 2020s.

China's participation in Arctic affairs is a process of interaction between Arctic states and a non-Arctic state with a huge size of economy. How the Arctic states view the role of non-Arctic states, and how to define the responsibilities and identities of non-Arctic states participating in Arctic affairs are all issues worth discussing. Chapter 2 tries to illustrate the interaction process of intra-regional countries with extra-regional countries, examines the change of the Arctic governance mechanisms and takes China as an example to explain the responsibility and definition of interests on the part of the important non-Arctic states in participating the Arctic governance and their role of improving the governance mechanisms. The performance of regional governance largely depends on the ability and the willingness of each actor to contribute to public goods. Governance goals will fail to be fulfilled if

public goods are insufficient. The contributions of the extra-regional actors are beneficial to the improvement of the Arctic governance system, yet bold behaviors of extra-regional countries may also cause concerns of the Arctic states. The non-Arctic states especially the large economies such as China may take a cautious and gradual approach to engaging themselves in Arctic affairs complying with overall international laws and fulfilling their international obligations to the polar environment.

Arctic governance constitutes a regional framework highly reliant on knowledge, a theme explored in Chapter 3. This chapter delves into the pivotal role of expert communities within the Arctic governance apparatus, highlighting their function as knowledge holders and beyond knowledge holders. The involvement of expert communities in the global governance political arena is scrutinized in terms of their sources of influence, mobilization capabilities, and institutional contributions. Knowledge emerges as a decisive factor in the evolution of governance structures, wherein an insufficient accumulation thereof can curtail the scope and depth of institutional advancements, while an expanded reservoir of knowledge enhances societal capacity to identify institutional deficiencies and instigate remedial actions. Arctic governance necessitates a spectrum of knowledge types, encompassing understanding of observations and pertinent facts, proficiency in ecological and environmental safeguarding techniques and tools, awareness of knowledge and technological breakthroughs conducive to sustainable development, and comprehension of belief systems instrumental in shaping governance frameworks. Upon widespread societal recognition, novel knowledge paradigms stimulate the restructuring of governance frameworks and incentivize governmental investment in scientific research. Through an examination of the knowledge requisites for the evolution of Arctic governance, Chapter 3 further probes into the ascendancy of expert communities within governance structures, their role in negotiation processes, and the significance of specialized knowledge across distinct phases of Arctic governance, underpinned by the axiom “knowledge is power”. Expert communities leverage their intellectual authority to

galvanize societal resources toward governance objectives. The fusion of scientific methodologies with democratic decision-making enhances the rationality and efficacy of political determinations. Legitimacy and authority accrue to international organizations through buttressing their mandates with scientific substantiation and governance methodologies, alongside the facilitation of expert groups in public science education and the shaping of public opinion on values and ethics. Consensus on policy trajectories is attainable post-exposition of facts and scientific evidence, facilitating the equitable redistribution of responsibilities, benefits, and resources within society.

Chapter 4 is an interpretation on China's Arctic policy. On January 26, 2018, the Chinese government released the white paper *China's Arctic Policy*. By issuing China's Arctic policy, the Chinese government has shown its concept, policy and responsibility to participate in Arctic affairs through joint efforts to seek effective responses to the global challenges. The concept of "the shared future of mankind" is fully embodied. The goals and basic principles of China's Arctic policy mainly stem from the basic concepts of Chinese diplomacy, the discretion on the world development trends, its identity and the awareness of the main contradictions in Arctic affairs. As a state near to Arctic, China is an important stakeholder. The advantages in diplomacy, economy, technology and market capacity will help China play an active role in maintaining Arctic peace, sustainable use of Arctic resources with green technology and balancing the interests of between the Arctic states and the rest of world.

Chapter 5 overviews and sorts out the practices of China's participation in Arctic affairs since 2013 when it was accepted as a formal observer to the Arctic Council at the Kiruna ministerial meeting. As a formal observer, China has attended most meetings of the Working Groups, Task Forces and Expert Groups of the Council, including the meetings of PAME working group, CAFF working group, AMAP working group, and the Scientific Cooperation Task Force (SCTF). China is a newcomer as an observer of the Arctic Council, and is accumulating experience and familiarity with the situation. Chinese representatives and experts have maintained good working relations

with the Arctic Council in all aspects. The roles that China has played in these working groups is complementary to other participants. China's participation in the joint efforts of the working groups is gradually integrated. However, due to the lack of experience and domestic procedure of overseas travel management in China, many Chinese research institutes cannot guarantee that the most suitable experts are able to continuously participate in all activities of the working groups.

China's polar science and technology team is an important force in filling the knowledge gap in the Arctic, and the Arctic scientific expedition is China's most important activity in the Arctic. So it has also attracted the attention of all parties. As the white paper points out, China supports and encourages research activities in the Arctic by constantly increasing investment in scientific research, building modernized research platforms, and improving the research capacity on the Arctic. China has so far built a polar observation network of air, shore, vessel, sea, ice, and seabed-based infrastructure to provide logistic support for the Antarctic and Arctic expeditions, and has made remarkable progresses in polar survey and scientific research. Chinese scientists have carried out geographical, climatic, glaciological, geological, ecological and oceanographic studies and made important discoveries. However, there still exists a substantial gap between China and other countries in several major aspects of polar research and exploration. Chapter 6 presents an in-depth analysis and assessment on the state-of-the-art China's polar research from following dimensions, namely, mechanism of policy making on polar affairs, mechanism of science diplomacy and polar governance, mechanism of on-spot research expedition management, mechanism for allocation of scientific funds, mechanism of forming polar scientific team, especially on the management system of Chinese National Arctic and Antarctic Research Expedition (CHINARE). From an integrated perspective of natural and social sciences, we present a vision for future reform of these mechanisms. We hope that our analysis can illustrate China's polar activities and their global influence to help readers understand the current polar research by the Chinese team.

The Polar Silk Road is a part of China's Arctic policy and an

extension of the Belt and Road Initiative. The introduction of the “Polar Silk Road (PSR)” into the first comprehensive white paper on Arctic policy offers the world an economic perspective to understand China's engagement in the Arctic. The Polar Silk Road is tantamount to international cooperation initiative between China and the related Arctic countries, which is intended to achieve common development and joint governance of the Arctic through knowledge accumulation, helps to promote interconnectivity and sustainable development in the region. Over the past few years, China has achieved policy synergies and launched industrial, scientific and technological cooperation with Russia and the Nordic countries. Chapter 7 introduces China's major investment projects and economic cooperation initiatives in the Arctic. With the enhanced capabilities, China is becoming a preferred partner for Russia and some Nordic countries in a number of infrastructure, energy and transportation projects within the Arctic region. The PSR framework to advance Arctic cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) presents both economic opportunities and environmental challenges for Chinese enterprises to balance the utilization and protection of the Arctic.

China and Russia are two major powers, and they are strategic partners of cooperation. Therefore, the cooperation between China and Russia in the Arctic has attracted worldwide attention. Chapter 8 explores the opportunities in the cooperation between China and Russia in the framework of PSR. The PSR provides a new growth pole for China-Russia pragmatic cooperation. China focuses on the coordination of national interests and strategies regarding development of Arctic sea routes and infrastructure projects with Russian part. Due to the fragile natural environment, China's cooperation in the framework of PSR prioritizes knowledge accumulation and scientific research as the guiding principle for cooperation, and promotes green technology solutions. Knowledge and capacity gaps among participants as well as economic and technological uncertainties are major challenges for feasibility and efficiency of cooperation, requiring more in-depth scientific research, comprehensive assessments and regular coordination and communication among all stakeholders.

Sino-Russian cooperation in the field of Arctic energy had caused widespread concern. Because of the Crimea issue and the Ukraine crisis in 2014, Western countries imposed a series of severe economic sanctions on Russia. As a consequence, Russia does not have access to technology, markets and capital it needs from the United States and other Western countries to support its Arctic energy development plans. Will China, which is not a party engaging in the sanctions but remains one of the world's most important economies with both available capital and a large potential market, take this opportunity to participate in Russian Arctic development projects? Would China's choice to partner with Russia cripple the effect of the sanctions against Russia? Additionally, would China's cooperation in the Arctic be seen as a sign that the Sino-Russian strategic coordination partnership is strengthening? Would these new Sino-Russian relations lead to a new alliance bloc? Chapter 9 explores the political and economic consequences of Sino-Russian Arctic energy cooperation. The two economies are complementary to each other in many ways and the leaders of the two countries have laid good foundation of political trust that promotes greater economic cooperation. Western countries' sanctions and containment policy are providing an external force to promote a closer strategic partnership between China and Russia. Even though the two countries have not formed a formal alliance, the two leaders agreed that the two countries should coordinate more closely on major international and regional issues, in order to jointly safeguard the security of the region around them. There is a huge demand in Russia for sophisticated, multi-functional and digitalized equipment that can improve productivity. Russian manufacturers are unable to produce these by themselves due to the lack of related know-how and technologies. Establishing a long-term stable arrangement for oil and gas supply is in line with China's national interests. The exploitation of oil and gas resources in the Arctic is accompanied by the construction of the NSR. For China, the value of this Arctic sea route will continue to increase with the further exploitation of Arctic oil and gas resources as well as normal business shipping in the NSR.

The five Nordic countries are all Arctic countries. They share

similar political and economic systems, as well as common values and cultures. As a whole, the five Nordic countries have a broad international vision and an inclusive attitude, and advocate cooperation at the global, regional and bilateral levels. The five Nordic countries support granting China the formal observer status in the Arctic Council. In April 2012, when the then Premier Wen Jiabao visited Iceland, China and Iceland signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Marine and Polar Science and Technology Cooperation. The signing of the Memorandum promoted specific cooperation projects such as the Xuelong polar scientific research vessel's visit to Iceland in August 2012 and the construction of a joint aurora observatory in 2013. At the same time, cooperative research and exchanges between China and other Nordic countries in the fields of natural sciences and social sciences have also developed smoothly. Chapter 10 introduces the cooperation between China and the Nordic countries in the Arctic, taking the China Nordic Arctic Research Center as a case, and summarizes the effects achieved by China and the Nordic countries in the dissemination of polar knowledge and the coordination of governance policies. In December 2013, the China-Nordic Arctic Research Center was officially inaugurated. The center has built a cooperation platform and a network of scholars, and carried out cooperative research and international exchanges around major Arctic issues. The practice of CNARC has extensive and far-reaching significance and influence. First, CNARC established a cognitive community to facilitate the transfer of Arctic knowledge from the Nordic countries to China. Second, CNARC has become an important channel for policy advocacy and information release in China and the Nordic countries. Third, the concept of governance is widely reflected in China's Arctic cooperation, and Chinese companies have taken specific actions to implement the governance concept. Finally, through the exchange platform CNARC, China's Arctic governance proposition has been positively responded.

Oran R. Young conceived a very important concept at the North Pacific Arctic Conference—*the North Pacific Lens*. This concept broadened and deepened our understanding of the Arctic by looking at the region through a new lens. Most contemporary thinking about the Arctic