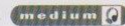


The race for the North



Die Eiskappe des Nordpols schmilzt stetig und unaufhaltsam. Deshalb hat das Rennen um die Schürfrechte für Bodenschätze im Arktischen Ozean längst begonnen.



The Arctic has long had a romantic appeal, with its endless white landscapes, polar bears, igloos and dancing Northern Lights. Now, climate change is making the region attractive for a new reason: economic profit. The polar ice cap is melting at an alarming rate, freeing large supplies of oil and gas and creating new shipping routes.

With so much money to be made, the countries around the Arctic Circle are rushing to stake their claims in the region, mapping the seabed to work out how far their lands extend beneath the thick ice. Canada, the US, Russia, Denmark and Norway are all determined to get rights to as much of the Arctic as possible.

That determination was demonstrated two years ago. In 2007, Russia sent a submarine and its crew to put a flag on the seabed, an action that has been compared to America's historic moon landing back in the late 1960s. Earlier this year, Russia had a diplomatic fight with Canada over aircraft training exercises in the area.

Canada has also been making a show of strength. It has detailed plans to open a new military training centre far in the north and to create a special fleet of patrol ships. The Canadian Rangers, a reserve force of Inuit — the original

people of the Arctic region — will act as the “eyes and ears” of the North.

Of special interest to Canada are the new shipping routes running through its island territories. These routes have the potential to revolutionize international shipping, offering a new path between Asia and Europe (see also page 38). But a number of countries, including the US, have said no to Canada's claims to ownership.

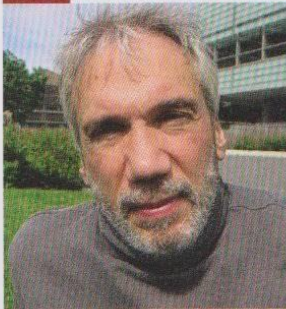
The United Nations is expected to settle claims to Arctic ownership by 2020. Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, countries are allowed to push their borders out into the ocean. But each candidate for expansion must first prove that the underwater landscape it is claiming is actually connected to its continental shelf. With the big melt now speeding up, all five countries are racing to complete their claims.

Canadian scientists recently said that the region, which is heating at twice the rate of the rest of the world, will be free of summer ice cover by 2013. In April, the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental group, promised to fight climate change and promote sustainable shipping and oil and gas production. Many fear, however, that this frozen paradise will be changed beyond all recognition.

Lorraine Mallinder asked people in Montreal, Canada:

Should anyone own the Arctic?

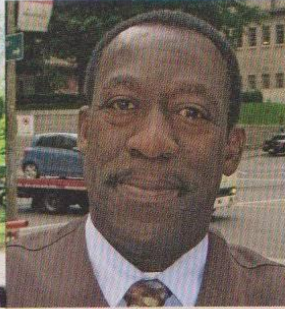
What do you think? Vote at www.spotlight-online.de



Howard Harris, 52, actor
Well, sure — the way any country should own any part of the world. I don't see that the Arctic would be any different. I feel that within reason, God has given us the earth so that we can use it.



Anne Summerhays, 21, student
Nobody should be owning the Arctic. All they're going to do is mine the resources and further destroy the earth. ... I like that people so far have only been doing scientific work up there.



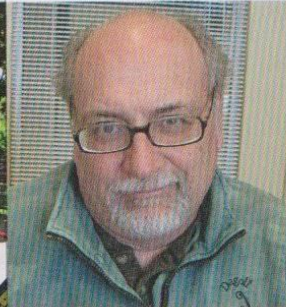
Albert George Sterling, 57, hotel doorman
The country that's closest to the Arctic should have sovereignty. However, all countries should help make sure the Arctic stays environmentally safe.



Laure Salvert, 33, air pilot
Canada has a lot of interests up there, and I think they should stake their claim. We need the oil. Everybody needs the oil. Our economies can't function without it.



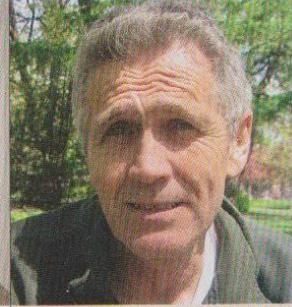
Monique Schmidt, 47, stay-at-home mum
There's only a little bit of land left for the polar bears and penguins. They have less and less room now, with the ice cap melting, so we shouldn't take over the little bit of land that's left to them.



Bryan Demchinsky, 57, newspaper editor
The Arctic is very important to Canada. It's part of our national song — the true north, strong and free. There's a very strong feeling for having control over a good part of the Arctic.



Wendy Thomson, 52, professor
You'd hope there would be some sovereignty for the people who have always inhabited that land. The Inuit have a relationship to the land, which seems only right and proper.



Sean O'Neil, 52, manager
The only way that Canada possibly could, would be if it was in America's self-interest that we did. I find it very peculiar that nations would lay claim to land that is beyond their own borders.

Listen to Howard, Anne, Laure and Sean on Spotlight Audio

Arctic Circle [ˌɑːktɪk 'sɜːkəl]	Polarkreis
change beyond all recognition [ˌtʃeɪndʒ biːjɒnd ɔːl ˌrekəg'nɪʃən]	nicht wiederzuerkennen sein
determined: to be ~ to do sth. [dɪ'tɜːmɪnd]	entschlossen sein, etw. zu tun
editor ['edɪtə]	Redakteur(in)
fleet [fliːt]	Flotte
free sth. [friː]	hier: etw. zugänglich machen
ice cover ['aɪs ˌkʌvə]	Eisdecke
inhabit sth. [ɪn'hæbɪt]	etw. bewohnen
law [lɔː]	Recht
lay claim to sth. [ˌleɪ 'kleɪm tə]	Anspruch auf etw. erheben
make a show of strength [ˌmeɪk ə ˌʃəʊ əv 'streŋθ]	seine Muskeln spielen lassen

mine sth. [maɪn]	etw. abbauen; hier: ausbeuten
peculiar [pɪ'kjuːliə]	seltsam
polar bear [ˌpəʊlə 'beə]	Eisbär
seabed ['siːbed]	Meeresboden
settle sth. ['setl]	etw. entscheiden
shelf [ʃelf]	Sockel
shipping route ['ʃɪpɪŋ ˌruːt]	Schiffahrtsweg
sovereignty ['sɒvrənɪti]	Hoheit(srechte)
stake one's claim [ˌsteɪk wʌnz 'kleɪm]	seinen Anspruch geltend machen
submarine [ˌsʌbməriːn]	U-Boot
sustainable [sə'steɪnəbəl]	umweltfreundlich, nachhaltig
within reason [wɪðɪn 'riːzən]	in einem vernünftigen Rahmen