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# The Polar Silk Road in the Popular Press: Global Media Framing of China's 2018 Arctic Policy White Paper

Derek Moscato

*China's issuance of its 2018 Arctic Policy white paper, calling for a "Polar Silk Road," provides a unique lens into how narratives about China are fostered in global news outlets. The white paper, garnering headlines from international media outlets, provided the kind of foreign policy milestone that allowed journalists to develop a narrative about the country's interest and actions in the polar sphere. Drawing from media framing theory, this study seeks to establish how three prominent media outlets from North America, Europe, and Asia covered China's high-profile Arctic publication. Using news stories and a qualitative analysis, this paper's analysis offers a glimpse into the dynamic interplay of global media and policy at a time when China's interests converge with the Arctic's increasingly prominent place in international affairs. China's self-identification as a "Near-Arctic State" has created an inevitable focal point for the press and subsequent dialogue highlighting the convergence of Chinese and Arctic affairs.*

## Introduction

China's ascent as a global political and economic power has been accompanied by much scrutiny from the West about its developing agenda in the Arctic. The country's interest in the polar region is buoyed by a combination of environmental concern and economic opportunity (Lanteigne & Ping, 2015). On January 26, 2018, China's State Council Information Office published the country's first Arctic white paper. The document formalized a series of oral statements from Chinese officials about the country's policy positions and aspirations in the decade previous (i.e. SIPRI, 2012; Rylander, 2015; Liu, 2016). Entitled *China's Arctic Policy*, it called for, among other things, greater international cooperation over shipping and infrastructure in the Arctic—a so-

called “Polar Silk Road” (Xinhua, 2018). International media headlines from publications such as *Newsweek*, the *Financial Times*, and the *South China Morning Post* were quick to latch onto the moniker in covering the development and providing assertions of what this meant for the region and the world.

China’s white paper highlights how the country envisions its future in the Arctic— not as a remote or separate site of ecology and geopolitics, but rather a strategic location for the country’s future interests in logistics, resources extraction, scientific exploration, and climate policy. As a result, the Arctic Policy white paper emerges as an important media artifact in understanding China’s motivations and aspirations in the polar sphere, and serves as a subsequent story angle for journalists or what is known as a “news peg.” For example, China’s September 2018 launch of the *Xuelong 2* polar research vessel, also known as *Snow Dragon II*, set off a number of articles in the international press about China’s Arctic ambitions. These articles continued a polar narrative about China already highlighted in previous stories about the earlier-launched *Snow Dragon* icebreaker. Media coverage about China’s Arctic white paper, then, is the inevitable outcome of a journalistic process that ties larger stories to events, incidents, or publicity announcements and missives that editors considers newsworthy.

White papers exist as a hybrid of organizational expertise, journalistic-styled communication, and institutional advocacy (Perez, 2011). However, while white papers and like-minded policy documents are well-read by scholars, technicians, specialists, politicians, and journalists, they are not necessarily created for mass consumption. The job of relaying the messaging from a white paper beyond a first-level audience to a larger public often falls to news reporters, whose audiences can number in the thousands or even millions. In the case of China’s Arctic Policy, as with similar scenarios, a majority of those made aware of the document’s assertions did not read the publication itself, but rather interpretations of it from intermediaries, including the popular press. Thus, media take on a heightened role in disseminating information between nations and publics. Because of their mass reach and influence on both audiences and policymakers, national and global news outlets can serve or undermine nation-state interests.

At the same time, China’s arrival in existing Arctic discourses has provided an opportunity for circumpolar nations such as Canada to press for greater international cooperation in the region and provide the Arctic with more prominence on the national political agenda (Lasserre, 2010). In other words, because of its national heft China brings an inevitably larger spotlight to the entire polar sphere. This study seeks to establish how three prominent media outlets in North America, Europe, and Asia covered China’s publication of its Arctic Policy white paper. Drawing from news stories, and using a qualitative framing analysis to assess how the white paper was conveyed to global audiences, this paper offers a glimpse into the dynamic interplay of global media and policy, at a time when China’s interests converge with the Arctic’s increasingly prominent place in international affairs. China’s self-identification as a “Near-Arctic State” has created an inevitable media focal point and subsequent dialogue highlighting the convergence of Chinese and Arctic affairs. Yet the media’s central role in constructing a narrative about a polar China deserves further scrutiny.

## Literature Review

### *China and the Arctic*

The emergence of China as a country of interest in scholarship about the Arctic has coincided with the region's growing significance in the global consciousness—particularly in the realms of ecological and economic affairs. Significant milestones have also led to more scholarly and media interest. In 2013, following years of negotiation, China was admitted to the Arctic Council as an observer nation, along with other Asian states, including Japan, Singapore, India, and South Korea. While a global perspective has been present in public dialogue about the Arctic over the past decade, especially in relation to environmental issues and social/economic development, China's 2013 inclusion emphasized further the confluence of the Arctic with globalization (Rainwater, 2013), marking a new era for international Arctic politics.

One polar view that has emerged from within China is that the Arctic is a region for all of humankind. However, according to Wright (2011), such a perspective contradicts the country's emphasis on sovereign state rights as a basis for international relations. Related to this is the belief that China would be less inclined to pursue an exploration strategy characterized by aggression or confrontation, in great part because such an approach might harm China's standing related to disputes in the South China Sea (Alexeeva & Lasserre, 2012).

More often, China's Arctic aspirations are understood through an economic lens, including transportation and logistical concerns such as shipping routes. China stands to benefit from lower regulatory costs as a result of shorter trips through the less-congested waters of the Northeast Passage—this in spite of the potential for technical challenges and the country's relatively limited experience in polar navigation (Campbell, 2012). A policy of collaboration and cooperation is therefore the most optimal path forward for China in the region because it benefits the country's economic and strategic positions (Alexeeva & Lasserre, 2012).

A corresponding yet distinct perspective sees China's interest in the Arctic as a direct extension of its overarching focus on science and innovation. The country's interest and involvement in Arctic science—which can be categorized by the disciplines of oceanography, biology, glaciology, and atmospheric science—is predicated on developing the kind of scientific policy and leadership that matches its global political and economic aspirations (Lasserre, 2018). Thus, China's Arctic engagement to date, and its policy moving forward, represents a much longer-term investment comprising economic and scientific innovation. Tonami (2014) situates the country's interests, along with other Asian powers such as Japan, as being aligned closer to economic security and development rather than traditional security concerns.

However, a much wider range of views about China's aspirations continue to circulate in international discourses. Diverging perspectives between China and the West have given way to an emerging “clash of identities” narrative, one that is sometimes based on earlier myths and misconceptions (Lantaigne & Ping, 2015). Such a constructivist perspective puts the spotlight on a key global conduit of information and ideas: The news media.

### *Coverage by the U.S. and Global Press*

Since the 1980s—a time of growing international influence, diplomatic engagement, and economic ties for the country—China has seen an accompanying upswing in international media exposure.

Even as China emerged as an inevitable economic rival to the United States at the turn of the millennium, the country's reputation cultivated by the media largely rested on the whims of American news outlets (Peng, 2004). Some scholars have suggested that the rise of interest in China has aligned with the need to make the country the inevitable enemy of the United States—with attention switching to China in the 1990s after the demise of the USSR (Stone & Xiao, 2007). Regardless of the motive, the growth of coverage about China in the U.S. media was not insignificant, as it came during a time when international coverage from the press was trending downwards on the whole (Peng, 2004).

Such extensive media treatments of China are not necessarily extended to the rest of Asia. A content analysis of media coverage of the SARS outbreaks connected to China and Vietnam in international newspapers (the *Washington Post*, the *Times of London*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Straits Times*, and *Newsweek*) found that Western news coverage emphasized China as the negative other, a media treatment not extended to Vietnam (Leung & Huang, 2007). Meanwhile, country of origin difference was found in media coverage of SARS between Chinese and U.S. newspapers (Luther & Zhou, 2005).

International media coverage critical of the Chinese government is a sharp contrast from the pro-government coverage in the country's domestic, state-owned publications. A comparison of news coverage of HIV/AIDS in China by the *Associated Press* and *Xinhua News Agency* found the latter to be sympathetic to the government's efforts—suggesting that news is a socially constructed phenomenon that reflects national values or agendas (Wu, 2007). A similar study, this time comparing media depictions of the Chinese gold medal-winning swimmer Ye Shiwen during the 2012 Summer Olympics in both the U.S. and Chinese media, highlighted an “us versus them” dichotomy that is strongly influenced by national ideology (Bie & Billings, 2013).

Visual media such as photojournalism also drives coverage of global events like the Olympics. Huang and Fahmy (2011), looking at the anti-China protests at the 2008 Beijing Summer Games, showed that the U.S. media focused on images of Chinese government suppression, as well as pro-Tibet demonstrations. However, online news sites from six countries, including China and the U.S., ultimately showed neither overt nationalism nor sporting bias during coverage of the subsequent London Summer Olympics (Eagleman, Burch & Vooris, 2014). The aforementioned studies underscore one reality of contemporary global media: The variety of such outlets creates a much more complex journalistic ecosystem than the one that existed even a decade previous.

Yet China garners a particular kind of media treatment because of its institutions, economic heft, and foreign engagement. So-called “elite media” play an especially critical role in shaping coverage of China from abroad. The *New York Times*' coverage of China's ascent as the world's second largest economy was embedded with three themes highlighting an interplay of Orientalism and neoliberalism, according to Ban, Sastry, and Dutta (2013): consumption as national duty, personal hyper-consumerism and luxury goods shopping, and China as a place that operates with disregard to international law.

Similarly, the *New York Times*' discourses about Chinese government policy between 1990 and 2000 have featured three “ideological packages” within its stories: globalization, engagement, and containment (Lee, 2010). The notion of China as international threat emerges in other studies, including those connecting media coverage to individual level cognition and beliefs. One survey of American views on China based on U.S. media coverage found that the country was viewed as

an economic and social threat, even as Chinese nationals individually were viewed as hardworking and intelligent (Zhang, 2015). The analysis points to another broader theme within media studies: while news stories and television programs may not accurately reflect the on-the-ground reality of world events, they shape a perceived reality for those who consume such media.

The tone and content of international media stories about China carries over into the polar sphere. Such stories reflect negativity or suspicion of Chinese activities. In turn, Chinese scholars argue that a media rhetoric of threat and suspicion have served to slow down China's active engagement in the Arctic (Bradie, 2017). Within geopolitics, an "imagined geography" can be both produced and reinforced by news media and other popular culture offerings. Mass media representations of Arctic geopolitics are often imbued with a "polar orientalism" that simultaneously emphasizes Eurocentric worldviews while obscuring key geographic and historiographic facts (Dodds & Nuttall, 2016). As some East Asian states, including China, reorient themselves toward the Arctic, they are vulnerable to news coverage that points to their polar interest as unconventional or suspicious.

Media coverage of China, like other topics in the global public sphere, is therefore subject not only to an emphasis or de-emphasis of certain themes, narratives, issues, and viewpoints. It is also rendered by journalistic values and practices embedded within the newsroom cultures of different nations, which in turn dictate the role of story variables such as conflict, responsibility, leadership, economy, and human-interest (Luther & Zhou, 2005). To this end, media framing endures as an appropriate lens for understanding how nations such as China, or their national events, are covered by journalists domestically or abroad.

### ***Media Framing and the Interpretation of News***

A well-established approach to analyzing global political discourses in the press is framing. Media framing helps audiences interpret the world around them in new or different ways, and involves the selection of information to provide different perspectives of reality. Entman (1993) highlights four functions within this framework: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies. Within broader public discourses, media framing draws from symbolic acts as well as cognitive processes—which in turn help audiences form positions on social or policy issues (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Specific devices—namely metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions, and visual images—enable the producers of discourse and media content to imbue content with meaning, which in turn can shift public opinion (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

Thus, the variables involved in the construction of frames help establish their salience. A framing analysis of the 1999 Seattle WTO Conference and subsequent "Battle in Seattle" showed that the Australian media highlighting of official sources and specific dramatic characteristics of public protest helped to demonize anti-WTO protesters (McFarlane & Hay, 2003). However, media framing can be a fluid entity—even within single events. Protesters at the G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh successfully generated their own frames through the media such as "First Amendment/right to protest" and "nonviolence" even as some news commentators and city officials characterized their activity as "violence" and "anarchy." Different framings, and therefore different meanings, can be generated by the same global media event.

Aligning with the view that information by itself doesn't translate into newsworthiness, Cox (2012)

suggests an outsized role for emotional appeals, tropes, narrations, and argumentation in environmental media controversies. A public media event (which can also be construed as a public relations or public diplomacy event), such as the publication of a national white paper, therefore exists as an interpretive construction fostered by audience and journalist perceptions.

Newsworthiness can thus be socially constructed—contingent upon features, meanings, and consequences of a story or topic (Lester, 1980). Breaking through to the audiences served by national and international media outlets with the right kind of news coverage becomes paramount for nations—which risk public disinterest/alienation or international opposition with the wrong kinds of coverage. Media framing of China has toggled between a developing and threatening China, as well as the ‘Red’ China and the authoritarian, Tiananmen Square China (Peng, 2004). Therefore, China comes in for both favorable and unfavorable treatment by outside news outlets. Because media coverage tends to pivot around major global events and issues, this study seeks to understand what media frames emerged during coverage of the country’s Arctic Policy white paper.

## Method

To address the research question, the study employed a qualitative content analysis design. In the context of journalism and media studies, qualitative data can be used to assess the appeals, narratives, and themes of textual documents or other mediation, while connecting such artifacts to overarching conceptual or thematic frameworks (Meyers & Abrams, 2010). Furthermore, Altheide (1996) situates qualitative research as a means to understanding the traits and significance of documents, including their meaning in a larger social arena. To this end, and because this study is concerned with the construction of news messaging about China’s Arctic engagement for a global audience, the author sought out widely-consumed news media artifacts that were distributed and consumed outside of China. Using a combination of Lexis-Nexis and Google News, the researcher used the search terms “China,” “Arctic,” and “White Paper” to locate relevant articles. The coverage timeframe was January 26, 2018 to February 14, 2018—representing the first three weeks after the publication of the white paper. While further coverage of the white paper was produced in the months following, the researcher felt the first three weeks captured a critical mass of voices that were focused on the document in isolation from other events; whereas subsequent coverage has placed the white paper alongside larger events and policies, thus diluting coverage of the white paper itself.

The Lexis-Nexis database located over 200 articles about the white paper’s release during this period. However, many of these stories were simply reproductions of existing wire service stories or press releases. Most of these media pieces were produced by official communication arms of the Chinese government, including the Xinhua News Agency. The author further narrowed the search criteria to newspapers only, which produced 51 articles. This number overstates actual coverage of the Arctic white paper in international media, however: A majority of stories were published in the Africa, European, and U.S. editions of *China Daily*. While this coverage is noteworthy, *China Daily*’s “state-owned” status in China (Smith, 2013, para.1) means these stories served aims of public diplomacy and public information more than as, ostensibly, independent or third-party journalism.

Given some of these distortions in global media coverage, the author chose to focus on corporate (non-government) news stories emanating from three of the world’s prominent centers for media

and capital markets activity: New York, London, and Hong Kong. As global media centers, these jurisdictions are home to journalistic production that is consumed by audiences beyond their immediate metropolitan regions. Furthermore, as centers for commercial activity and trade, their media are inherently interested in geopolitical and global economic activity. Related to this, the author looks to assessments of the growing literature devoted to China's Arctic interests, which see the country through lenses of geopolitics but also political economy (Lackenbauer, Lajeunesse, Manicom & Lasserre, 2018). Similarly, media have focused not only as China the political entity, but the transformative economic and financial story as well. Thus, publications with an emphasis on geopolitics, international relations, and global business/economics are a key and influential part of the international China dialogue.

From the initial search on Lexis-Nexis and a subsequent search on Google News, three online publications were identified. Part of the so-called popular press, including newspaper and television media, they are New York area-based CNBC, the London-based *Financial Times*, and the Hong Kong daily *South China Morning Post*. CNBC is an American basic cable channel focused on economic, financial, and political affairs. It is part of the New York City-headquartered NBC Universal News Group, which is owned by Comcast. The *Financial Times*, which also focuses on economic and business affairs, is owned by Nikkei Inc. The *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong's English-language daily, is owned by Alibaba, which purchased the publication in 2015. The new ownership group sees the newspaper as an international source for Chinese affairs (Hoffman Agency, 2018). Unlike *China Daily* and other official Chinese media outlets, the *South China Morning Post* offers a view of China from Hong Kong, simultaneously independent yet existing within China's borders.

Noteworthy here is the relatively minimal attention paid to the white paper publication from other leading media in the U.S., in particular the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* (the former's coverage was lumped in with coverage of the World Economic Forum and China's broader Belt and Road Initiative, while the *Post* did not provide any coverage at the time).

A total of four stories were retrieved from *South China Morning Post*; while two each were collected from CNBC and the *Financial Times*. These were exclusively news and feature stories. Letters to the editor and social media messages (such as tweets or blog posts) were not included. The author coded each article for the dominant frames used to explain China's engagement with the Arctic, as well as variables and devices (such as expressions, clichés, and numbers) within the content.

## Results

Collectively, the articles collected developed a discourse about international interests in the Arctic, and specifically created frames about China and its Arctic engagement. The frames that emerged for the highlighted publications will be briefly described.

### *Resources, Partnerships, and Passages*

A key emergent frame, one that featured prominently in media coverage, focused on the economic drivers and outcomes of China's Arctic interests. This frame corresponds closely with China's original white paper. References to the "Polar Silk Road," an expression that originally appeared in the white paper itself, emphasized China's desire to tap into the region's hydrocarbon and mineral natural resources, including natural gas reserves. "Polar partnerships"—with Russia,



Iceland, Finland, and Norway—were observed. The *Financial Times* highlighted China's interest specifically in Greenland, including its interest in "rare earth metals and possible rights to Arctic ports" according to an expert. The *South China Morning Post* described China's ambition to exploit shipping routes to Europe, and its interest in not only natural resources, including fishing, but also developing Arctic tourism. CNBC tied China's Arctic engagement to the Belt and Road Initiative, the country's attempt to "construct a massive, multi-national zone of economic and political influence that has Beijing at its core."

Some references to economic aspirations in the region painted China in a decidedly more positive light. CNBC explained that capital and joint venture opportunities would benefit China's national partners that lacked necessary funding for such activities on their own.

### ***Territorial History and Ambitions***

In this frame, China was situated as a nation intent on growing its geographic footprint. This coverage reflected existing tensions between China and its Asian neighbors, such as Japan-China disagreement over the Senkaku archipelago. The *South China Morning Post*, for example, emphasized how geopolitical tensions with Japan would be exacerbated if it were to deploy warships northward—through the Soya, Tsugaru, and Tsushima straits—to the region. It also quoted an editorial from Japan's *Yomiuri* newspaper arguing for the world to be wary of China's Arctic advances, because the country's Belt and Road Initiative is "aimed at securing military footholds."

China's history with previous territorial disputes was asserted, including disputes in the South China Sea. CNBC's coverage spoke to "red flags" about potential boundary disputes and Chinese aggression, noting that in the South China Sea, "China has ignored maritime law and a legally binding tribunal by building islands there." Noted also was how the country's Arctic ambitions fit in with the Belt and Road initiative, and that China wished to connect itself to Europe, the Middle East, and beyond via massive infrastructure projects across dozens of countries. At the same time, the global leadership ambitions of President Xi Jinping were also highlighted. One example of this was the emphasis on the development of shipping lanes opened up by global warming. The encouragement of companies and governments to build infrastructure and even conduct trial voyages—"paving the way for... routes that would form a 'Polar Silk Road'"—can be framed simultaneously as territorial ambition or national innovation.

### ***China the Global Innovator***

In this third frame, China's engagement with the Arctic emerges as the inevitable outcome of a nation transformed as a result of its growing political, economic, and scientific clout. Highlighting the white paper's assertion that the Arctic represents "a shared future for mankind," CNBC explained China's concern over climate change and its implications for the region and the planet. Other publications, however, positioned China's interest in climate change exclusively in terms of the melting of sea ice opening up new passages for shipping as well as previously inaccessible, resource-rich areas.

The *South China Morning Post* relayed China's interest in emergent areas of innovation and science—polar, oceanic, space, and digital/technology—that had advanced alongside China's global influence and clout. Also noted was China's ability to potentially play the role of peacemaker in the region. The *Financial Times*, for example, noted that China had set up a joint research center in

Shanghai with institutes from five of the Arctic nations with sometimes overlapping claims and interests. The *Financial Times*, while describing the “slow-motion race for the control of the region”, highlighted the first transit of the Northwest Passage by a Chinese research ship in 2017, thus speeding up travel time by seven days (even as it also noted tensions with Canada over this). To this end, China is held up as a global power using its political and economic strength to develop solutions to existing international challenges—even as geopolitical tensions sometimes arise over them.

## Analysis and Conclusion

News coverage of China’s Arctic Policy white paper demonstrates how media can collectively construct a perceived reality of the nation-state in different contexts. This is true even of a tightly-controlled communication document such as the international white paper. Even as it is produced within China’s controlled media environment, the white paper is subjected to the whims of the relatively uncontrolled global media ecosystem. Media can frame, and reframe, ideas through the inclusion of symbolic devices (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), rhetorical variables, or editorial approaches such as emphasis or repetition.

At the same time, through frames this media process helps weave a narrative about the arrival of the world’s arguably most robust economy to the Arctic. Frames that emerged from the news about this key geopolitical milestone developed some of the same themes that are seen in coverage of China outside of the Arctic. For example, the frame of resources, partnerships, and passages picked up on a narrative about China that has been well told over the past two decades: China’s economic engine continues to drive the country’s growth, aspirations, actions, and relationships.

At the same time, negative portrayals of China as the “other”—this time in the context of the Arctic—are also seen. The “clash of identities” narrative described by Lanteigne & Ping (2015) is seen when China’s Arctic strategy is juxtaposed against China’s track record in the South China Sea, situating the country in potential opposition to established Arctic nations, to its Asian rivals such as Japan, and to international law. Indeed, the inclusion of China’s territorial disputes in the South China Sea allowed media stories to preview one potential (and aggressive) pathway for China in the Arctic. This theme in particular was espoused by the *South China Morning Post*: While different international media might uniformly frame an initiative such as the white paper as “suspicious”, the construction of such a threat can be different based on regional or contextual factors. What one country identifies as aggression might be perceived as less menacing in another.

Nonetheless, a concurrent theme emerging from China’s Arctic interest is that of the global innovator, although a media dialectic of nautical, geographic, and environmental advances toggles between enthusiasm and fear. However, global media coverage ultimately highlighted China’s desired or established partnerships with multiple countries as a basis for economic but also political cooperation. Such reporting echoes the view of Alexeeva and Lasserre (2012) that a policy of collaboration and cooperation is the best strategic path forward for China.

Climate change, unsurprisingly, factored extensively into the news coverage. However, while some reporting did focus on China’s global role in reducing carbon emissions, this environmental framing variable was linked extensively to China’s economic ambitions—specifically by explaining how melting ice would give way to enhanced transportation corridors. This shows one of the key challenges for China as it increasingly tries to influence the media narrative about its political rise:

Even when it takes a leadership role in globally pressing areas such as climate change, such actions are subject to interpretation by some media as a pathway to political or economic advantage.

While this study did not analyze all stories about China's Arctic Policy white paper, it did provide a snapshot of how some media coverage from outside of China coalesced to provide distinct narratives about China's Arctic Strategy white paper and its polar engagement. Such articles are not produced in isolation, and broader contextual factors need to be considered when one analyzes such coverage. For example, at the time of the announcement, China's economy had enjoyed strong growth over the past 12 months. At the same time, the country was the focus of aggressive trade banter from U.S. President Donald Trump; and the country continued to reaffirm its commitment to the Paris climate accord, from which the United States had recently departed. While these factors might not have directly influenced how stories about the country's Arctic engagement were written, they did help to inform a much larger discourse about China's international relations and global aspirations. At the same time, as noted in the methodology, China itself produced much of the global public discourse through its official communication arms, including its *China Daily* international editions. A future study might compare and contrast commercially-owned media's framing of China's Arctic milestones with the state-controlled coverage produced within China's borders, including its official news channels and government communication agencies.

Lastly, it is worth noting that China's publication of a white paper served to both broadcast policy and promote the country's national interests in the polar sphere. As a public document, it invited mass consumption through media coverage—as national white papers exist as informational and publicity conduits between policy and publics. Thus, China would have expected media coverage to inevitably follow its Arctic Policy publication. This sequence of media events hints at a China that is actively aware of how global media can influence and shape narratives abroad, and how China's interests in the Arctic are ultimately better served by more favorable news treatment and audience sentiment. The framing of international policy in the media is more than just discursive phenomena in the global public sphere; it represents a strategic communication pathway and opportunity for nations intent on reclaiming media narrative, public opinion, and policy outcomes.

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