MP - Concours blanc - SYNTHESE DE DOCUMENTS. -
– durée de l'épreuve : 3h00 -

3 march 2025

Rédiger en anglais et en 400 mots une synthèse des documents proposés, qui devra obligatoirement comporter un titre. Indiquez avec précision, à la fin du travail, le nombre de mots utilisés (titre inclus), un écart de 10 % en plus ou en moins sera accepté.

Document 1 - The Arctic: climate change's great economic opportunity

Adapted from THE ECONOMIST Jan 23rd 2025

For bears of both the market and polar kind, a planet without an ice cap is a tragedy. The Arctic is warming four times faster than the world at large. Since the 1980s the volume of ice has fallen by 70% or more. The Arctic's first ice-free day may occur before 2030.

A warming Arctic should yield enormous dividends. Retreating ice will create shipping shortcuts. Maritime access and melting glaciers will make it easier to extract minerals, just when the world craves resources from the Arctic's virgin geology. Warming waters may entice hordes of fish. This could upend trade, energy and geopolitics. The prospect has sparked a rush of diplomats and miners. In December China set a world record, unveiling a "polar-ready" 58,000-tonne cargo ship.

One benefit already on offer is bigger catches. Some species, such as snow crab and Alaska's king salmon, are struggling in warmer, somewhat acidified water. Nutrient-rich water could also help populations grow faster, while receding ice opens up new grounds and lengthens fishing seasons.

Such benefits may pale in comparison to those offered by new shipping routes. Melting ice could open three paths, the Northern Sea Route (NSR), which hugs the Russian coast and the Transpolar Sea Route (TSR), which runs over the North Pole.

All three could shorten trips between Asia, North America and Europe, which account for most shipping, saving on fuel and wages. They could also avoid chokepoints such as the Panama and Suez canals.

The Arctic's last prize concerns commodities. This used to mean hydrocarbons. The region is thought to hold 13% of the world's undiscovered oil and 30% of untapped natural gas. But its deposits are among the costliest to exploit—not ideal when demand for oil is flagging.

Instead, the hope lies with the Arctic's "green" minerals, which global warming is making more accessible. They include cobalt, lithium and nickel, important ingredients in electric-car batteries; zinc, used in solar panels and wind turbines; copper, required for all sorts of things electric; and rare earths, crucial to many types of green and military equipment. Niche metals including titanium and vanadium, used to make "super-alloys", are also prized. Greenland looks especially well resourced in this regard. The island has reserves of 43 out of 50 minerals deemed "critical" by the American government. Its known rare earths amount to 42m tonnes, some 120 times more than the world mined in 2023.

The International Energy Agency, an official forecaster, reckons that the global market for such minerals will double in value by 2040, if countries stick to existing climate pledges. Western countries are also eager to discover new sources so as to bypass China, which dominates supply.

Plenty of obstacles may prevent the transformation of the Arctic into a modern El Dorado. But the prize on offer is such that, over coming decades, the Arctic will surely become an economic as well as a geopolitical venue.

Document 2 - Greenland goes to the polls in rare earth mining election

The Guardian 6 April 2021

Greenland went into legislative elections on Tuesday, after a campaign focused on a disputed mining project in the autonomous Danish territory as the Arctic island confronts first-hand the effects of global heating.

Greenland's two main parties are divided on whether to authorise a controversial giant rare earth and uranium mining project, which is currently the subject of public hearings.

Supporters, including the ruling social democratic Siumut party, say the mine would yield an economic windfall. Opponents, such as the opposition left-green IA (Inuit Ataqatigiit) party, argue it could harm the vast island's unspoilt environment.

Greenland's geostrategic location and massive mineral reserves have raised international interest, as evidenced by the former US president Donald Trump's swiftly rebuffed offer to buy it in 2019.

The election campaign for parliament's 31 seats has also centred on fishing, the main driver of Greenland's economy.

At a time when young Greenlanders are reconnecting with their Inuit roots and questioning their Danish colonial heritage, social issues and cultural identity have also been part of the debate.

People lined up as polling stations opened for the island's roughly 40,000 voters. "I'm not voting like the last few times," said Frederik Gronvold, who said he wanted to see the development of fishing across the country. "I'm hoping for change."

IA is leading in the latest opinion polls with about 36% of voter support, while Siumut, which has been in almost uninterrupted power since Greenland gained autonomy in 1979, is trailing with 23%.

IA has called for a moratorium on uranium mining, which would effectively put a halt to the mining project.

The Kuannersuit deposit, in the south of the island, is considered one of the world's richest in uranium and rare earth minerals – a group of 17 metals used as components in hi-tech devices such as smartphones, flat-screen displays, electric cars and weapons.

A poll published on Monday showed that 63% of respondents were against the mining project, although only 29% were against mining in general.

The Siumut party leader, Erik Jensen, has said the mine would be "hugely important for Greenland's economy", helping diversify revenues. That is crucial if the island wants to gain full independence from Copenhagen someday.

Denmark, which is not opposed to Greenland's independence, gives the island annual subsidies of about €526m (£450m), accounting for about a third of its budget.

Greenland plans to grow its economy by developing its fishing, mining and tourism sectors, as well as agriculture in the southern part of the island, which is ice-free year-round.

"To harvest sustainably the living natural resources, like fish stocks, is going to be the most long-term [solution] for Greenland," Minik Rosing, a geobiology professor at the University of Copenhagen, said. The island's mineral potential "has only been investigated to some extent, but not in depth".

For the Cambridge University Arctic specialist Marc Jacobsen, keeping the option of large-scale mining open is the reason why Greenland has not signed the Paris climate accord. The treaty lets states decide their own measures to meet the common goal of keeping global warming under 2C.

"Signing the Paris agreement would not allow them to develop any big mining project," Jacobsen said.

And yet the Arctic has been warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet since the 1990s, dramatically affecting the traditional way of life for the Inuit, who make up more than 90% of Greenland's population.

IA has vowed to sign the Paris agreement if it comes to power.

Document 3 - If we want an energy transition, we must have more mining arcticeconomiccouncil.com

By Mads Qvist Frederiksen, Executive Director of the *Arctic Economic Council* (AEC)

The **Arctic Economic Council** (AEC) is an independent international business membership organisation representing companies that work with and within the Arctic (Wikipedia)

The demand for raw materials is expected to increase by 500% between now and 2050, according to the World Bank, due to the energy transition that the world is going through.

In the Arctic region, we can find many of the metals and minerals needed for the green transition. On January 12th 2023, the Swedish mining company LKAB announced that around 700 meters below the ground, they had discovered the largest known deposit of rare earth elements in Europe – a raw material that is it is critical for our transition to new, green technologies but is not currently being mined in Europe.

All across the Arctic, the local communities have for centuries been involved in the mining sector. The region has been mined throughout history to attain the building blocks for a more modern and developed civilisation globally. Yet, people's understanding of the importance of mining has decreased over time as new mines have been placed in remote and distant locations with different regulatory frameworks than in the Arctic. However, now the world needs Arctic mining again because the region has many of the raw materials needed in the green transition and in places with fair and transparent jurisdictions.

In early March 2023, the president of the European Commission Ursula de Leyden highlighted the importance of mining at the beginning of the year when she said:

> "The economies of the future will no longer rely on oil and coal, but on lithium, silicon metal for chips and on rare earths. The green and digital transitions will massively increase our need for these materials."

Both the EU and the USA have recognised that they risk simply replacing fossil fuel dependency to mineral dependency from authoritarian states if they don't act now.

China – who today is processing most of the world's raw materials and thus holds a competitive advantage, is also moving into new mining regions such as Madagascar and deep-sea mining off the coast of Mozambique. Some Chinese companies have also shown an interest in mining projects throughout the Arctic region.

Mining has become an issue of security but it is also just as much about the future of planetary health; the unavoidable fact is that our sustainable future begins deep underground in a mine. Yet, there were no references to mining in the most recent report of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

We cannot afford to slow down with mining. It is clear that we are going to need a vast amount of green energy in the future, and for that, we will need a vast amount of critical minerals.

As we can see, we must diversify our raw materials supply and develop mining operations in new places, instead of outsourcing to developing countries. The Arctic region contains many of the minerals that are currently mined elsewhere, even though the quality of the ore could possibly be better in the north.

We cannot get anywhere close to the quantity of required raw materials in a sustainable manner unless developed countries are also pursuing mining opportunities.

The good news is that there is growing consumer demand for more supply chain transparency, tighter environmental regulations, and labour rights. This, combined with the strategic importance, may lead to more mining in the Arctic. The first obstacle to overcome is the idea of "NIMBY – not in my backyard" or "Green colonialism" which some interest groups are promoting. Some of the interest groups don't even live in the front yard of the Arctic but believe that the region should be kept separate from wider global development.

However, local communities ultimately benefit from having a mine close-by. They create new jobs and the supply and demand for supporting services. In some parts of the Arctic, it is the mining companies that construct and develop the infrastructure to improve the lives in the north. For example, through investment in schools and renewable energy.

The Arctic offers the raw materials we need to build a greener and cleaner future, but it would take some policy changes and local compromises to fully utilize the potential. I believe though, that if we manage to show the opportunities in the north – then people will come and make a difference for the global community.

<u>Document 4</u> - 'Green colonialism': Indigenous world leaders warn over west's climate strategy

Jenni Monet *The Guardian* 23 September 2023

World Indigenous leaders meeting this week at an annual UN summit have warned that the west's climate strategy risks the exploitation of Indigenous territories, resources and people.

New and emerging threats about the transition to a greener economy, including mineral mining, were at the forefront of debate as hundreds of Indigenous chiefs, presidents, chairmen and delegates gathered at the 22nd United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The longtime advocacy group, Cultural Survival, in partnership with other organizations, highlighted how mining for minerals such as nickel, lithium, cobalt and copper – the resources needed to support products like electric car batteries – are presenting conflicts in tribal communities in the United States and around the world.

As countries scramble to uphold pledges to keep global warming to 1.5C (2.7F) above pre-industrial levels by 2030, big business and government are latching on to environmentally driven projects such as mineral needs or wind power that are usurping the rights of Indigenous peoples – from the American south-west to the Arctic and the Serengeti in Africa.

Gunn-Britt Retter of the Saami Council, an organization representing the Sami peoples of Finland, Russia, Norway and Sweden, said she had been raising awareness about what she calls the "green colonialism" driving harmful sustainability projects on Sami and Indigenous lands. The most recent example has been the Fosen onshore windfarm that was built despite a supreme court ruling in Norway in defense of Sami reindeer herding grounds.

"They look to us to carry the heaviest burden and it's a disproportionate part of the burden," she said of Indigenous peoples caught in the middle of a climate conundrum. "We need to reduce CO2 emissions globally, and we need to seek alternative energy sources, but we also need to protect the Indigenous cultures because we are the guardians of nature, which is part of the solution."

<u>Fin de l'énoncé</u>