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PLENARY SESSION

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## Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings Delegates,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the simulation of the UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY: *PLENARY* at Jaipuria Model United Nations 2018.

The *PLENARY* is traditionally one of the most dynamic and intriguing Committees at Model UN Conferences, and this simulation promises to be nothing less. This Background Guide touches upon different aspects that are relevant to the Agenda, but is only prepared to be the starting point of your research. Make sure you go through the guide in as much detail as you can, as it will be forming the basis of your entire research. We are enthusiastically looking forward to meeting you all of you and hope this study guide will stimulate your appetite for the wonderful hours we shall spend together during and after debate! We look forward to three days of deliverance, defense, delivery and outcomes reflective of the current world dynamics.

Feel Free to contact us, in case of any issue.

Happy researching!

Regards,

**Bhaskar Vishwajeet**  
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**(8756887723)**

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## ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

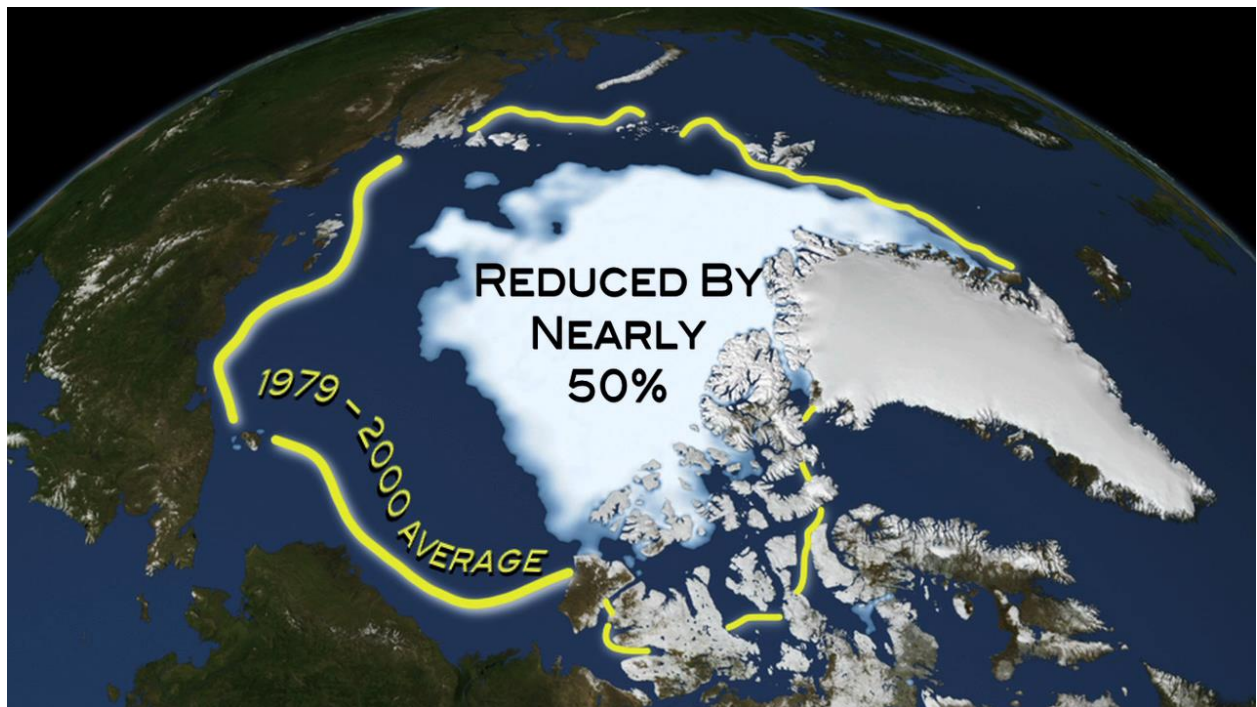
The General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Comprising all Members of the United Nations, it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter. The Assembly meets in regular session intensively from September to December each year, and thereafter as required. It is the only UN organ in which all member nations have equal representation and the main deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the UN.

The *functions and powers* of the General Assembly are stipulated in **Chapter IV** of the Charter of the United Nations.

A plenary session is a [session](#) of a [conference](#) which all members of all parties are to attend. Such a session may include a broad range of content, from [keynotes](#) to panel discussions, and is not necessarily related to a specific style of presentation or deliberative process.

Therefore, UNGA Plenary is a session which can take up discussion relating to any topic concerning the world. For example, DISEC can only discuss issues related to international defense and military issues of different nations, ECOFIN can only discuss Economic matters but on the other hand a PLENARY committee of UNGA can discuss both these issues giving it an upper hand in solving international disputes a little faster.

## Introduction



The Arctic could see its first ice-free summer as soon as 2030 as the region continues to warm faster than the rest of the planet.

With the rapid melting of ice in the Arctic region, the long-isolated region is becoming a more accessible zone for commercial fishing, fresh water, minerals, coal, iron, copper, oil, gas, and shipping. Thus, the region is increasingly catching the world powers' attention. Some scientists think we've reached a point of no return, where no amount of reducing carbon emissions will save the Arctic, and a small group of scientists think it's time for an intervention to help Mother Nature out.

Arctic states like Canada, Denmark (via Greenland), Russia, Norway and the U.S. – are in rush to exploit all these opportunities from the region, which is believed to hold huge oil and natural gas resources. With such lust for resources, there is the likelihood that the slow militarization, which has already been initiated by the stake-holding states, will be intensified, jeopardizing the peace and stability of the region and the globe.

The Arctic region is located around the North Pole and surrounded by landmasses of the aforementioned five countries. Since the Arctic region was “inaccessible” until the end of 20th century because of the layers of thick ice, there were less territorial disputes until the beginning of this (21st) century. However, ice are melting rapidly in the Arctic region because of the global warming, clearing this ice-covered region from ice. The ice of the region is already reduced by as much as 50% from 1950s. The region is warming faster than other areas across the globe. Such rapid melting of ice is making the region a more “accessible” zone. The melting of the sea ice has been opening up trade routes (during the summers) between Asia and Europe through the

Arctic Ocean; the same region where such trades routes were unimaginable even couple of decades ago. In 2007, the Northwest Passage between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans opened for the first time in memory.

The constant change in the climate and the increasing accessibility to the region would make the extraction of oil and gas from the region much easier. Estimations from different corners reveal that the region is speculated to hold oil reserves of upto 13% of the global total of undiscovered oil, upto 30% of natural gas, and also other precious metals. Such 'speculations' and 'accessibility' have given rise to plenty of disputes that have emerged among the aforementioned five countries surrounding the region.

## History of intervention by countries in the Arctic region

### **The Arctic during cold war (1946-1991):-**

From the 1950's on, the Arctic region became a stage for tight military escalation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Through intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) development and placement, production of nuclear powered attack submarines and the threat of cruise missiles carried by bomber planes, the two countries poured resources into building up their capabilities in the area *vis-à-vis* one another. Most prominently, preventive radar systems were built and installed across the Arctic region by both Americans and their allies and by Soviets.

It should also be noted that specific natural conditions of the Arctic environment also provided cover-up for military attacks via submarine-launched ballistic missiles, once the Arctic Ocean's deep waters allowed nuclear submarines to stay submerged for weeks or months. Moreover, the creaking noise of marginal ice zone produced favorable conditions for these submarines not to be detected by the aforementioned early warning systems. In light of the cold war international structure, the production of nuclear submarines became paramount to regional dominance in the Arctic.

In 1987, however, the international system saw the first major move towards a cooperative framework in dealing with the Arctic coming from one of the superpowers. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, the then Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev delivered a speech which came to be known as the "Murmansk Initiative", outlining objectives to ease the confrontational nature of Arctic international politics, as well as to foster cooperation in scientific development, environmental issues etc.

### **Military Activity in the Arctic since 1990's:-**

With the dismantlement of the Soviet Union in 1991 into its successor republics and the consequent end of the cold war confrontation, military activity in the Arctic region underwent several changes. Many of the (now Russian) Northern Fleet submarines were decommissioned; and the DEW line (Distance Early Warning line) sites were

handed back to Canada by the United States in 1990, and in 1993 a formal deactivation ceremony was held in Tuktoyaktuk, Northwestern Territories, Canada. Throughout the 1990's and 2000's, cooperation initiatives in diverse fields related to the Arctic mushroomed in the International scene. The most prominent was the foundation of the Arctic council in 1996(a more detailed information about the Arctic Council has been mentioned later in the background guide).

With the United States redirecting its attentions to new security threats and the Soviet Union broken up in resource-scarce republics, this was the time not only for regional cooperation but also time for different kinds of competition. With the prospects of an increasingly ice free Arctic region looming large, countries were now eyeing not only the strategic importance of the North Pole surrounding areas, but also its economic profitability due to untapped oil and gas resources and shorter international commercial routes. In sum, the recent (meaning from 1990's) military developments in the Arctic region shed some light on the importance of its underlying causes. In other words, issues such as political prominence and territorial sovereignty in the Arctic have become undissociable from the economic prospects to which global warming and the progressive melting of the ice cap signal, both in terms of resource exploitation and of commercial routes.

### **Arctic Shipping Routes:-**

Arctic shipping routes are the maritime paths used by vessels to navigate through parts or the entirety of the Arctic. There are three main routes that connect the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans: the Northeast Passage the Northwest Passage, and the transpolar sea route. In addition, two other significant routes exist: the Northern Sea Route, and the Arctic Bridge.

To connect the Atlantic with the Pacific, the Northeast Passage goes along the Northern Canadian and Alaskan coasts, the Northwest Passage follows the Russian and Norwegian coasts, and the transpolar sea route crosses the Arctic through the North Pole.

The Arctic Bridge is an internal Arctic route linking Russia to Canada, and the Northern Sea Route trails the Russian coast from the Bering Strait to the East, to the Kara Sea to the West.

The main difference between the NSR and the NEP is that the latter comprises the Barents Sea and provides access to the port of Murmansk, the largest Russian Arctic port, and to the Atlantic. Given that the NSR constitutes the majority of the NEP, some sources use the terms NSR and NEP interchangeably.

### **The Change in the Global Mean Sea Level:-**

Global mean sea level has increased throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continues to rise in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The estimated increase in global mean sea level for the period

1901 to 2010 is between 0.17 meter and 0.21 meter (6.7 inches to 8.3 inches). It is likely that the rate of increase in sea level has increased in recent decades.

Thermal expansion of the oceans and shrinking land ice account for most of this sea level rise. Natural and human-induced changes in water storage on the land as groundwater or in reservoirs are small by comparison with these two major contributors. In the past, much of the contribution from land ice has been from small glaciers and ice caps. These small glaciers and ice caps, referred to here as glaciers, are all land ice that is not part of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets. The term ice sheet is used only for the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets. However, since 1990, the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have begun to contribute more. The contributions to sea level rise from the two ice sheets are currently roughly the same. Smaller glaciers and ice sheets will continue to contribute to sea level rise in the future.

Almost all glaciers worldwide are shrinking. Ice lost from glaciers ultimately end up in the oceans. Glaciers in Alaska, the Canadian Arctic, the Russian Arctic, around the periphery of Greenland, and Svalbard make up 56% of the total glacier area on the globe. These Arctic glaciers are contributing to sea level at a rate of  $164 \pm 20$  gigatons per year. The contribution from all glaciers in the world between 2005 and 2009 was  $301 \pm 135$  gigatons per year. By contrast, between 2002 and 2011 the Greenland ice sheet contributed between 157 gigatons per year, and 274 gigatons per year, with a mean of 215 gigatons per year. Over the same period, Antarctica contributed between 72 gigatons per year and 221 gigatons per year with a mean of 147 gigatons per year.

### **Will Arctic warming lead to further warming through a carbon cycle feedback?**

Most Arctic land areas are underlain by permafrost – perennially frozen ground. There is a great deal of carbon stored in these permafrost soils. The concern is that, as the Arctic warms, and this permafrost begins to thaw, microbial activity in the soil will increase, with respiration leading to a release of some of this stored carbon back to the atmosphere, leading to further warming. There is a great deal of uncertainty regarding both when this climate feedback might kick in and how important it will be.

## **Economic Interests of Countries in Arctic**

The main driving force behind increased international attention towards the Arctic is the potential economic benefit that the region has to offer. Extensive hydrocarbon deposits—the region has up to 30 percent of the world's undiscovered gas reserves—are the most attractive feature of economic development in the Arctic. Moreover, the Arctic is also rich in minerals, including rare earth elements, as well as in fisheries, an often-overlooked resource. Furthermore, the opening of Arctic sea-lanes provides a shorter connection between European and Asian markets and, combined with the



pristine natural beauty of the Arctic, creates an alluring tourist destination. Nonetheless, despite the common general economic interest in the Arctic, countries all have competing individual interests. Effective cooperation is thus far from assured, and competing economic interests may very well lead to conflict.

The economic situation of the circumpolar Arctic is distinct among world regions. The formal economy is based on the large-scale exploitation of natural resources; however, traditional hunting and gathering, fishing, and animal husbandry also continue to be important to northern peoples. Arctic sub-regions depend strongly on their mother economies in the south, and the central governments of Arctic states support much of the overall consumption through transfer payments to local agencies and individuals. In general, the Far North plays an asymmetrical role in the world economy, exporting considerable quantities of raw materials and importing most of the finished products needed to meet internal demands.

Russia and the United States (Alaska) represent the largest economic powers in the Arctic, mainly because of their impressive stakes in petroleum and mining activities. The Russian Federation, which encompasses the biggest and most populated territory in the Far North, produces about two-thirds of the region's total wealth.

With their comparatively dense populations, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland are the most economically diversified. All have highly advanced communication networks, transportation infrastructures, and commercial and public services. The Canadian Arctic, with its widely dispersed population and considerably less diversified economic base, accounts for a more modest share of the overall regional economic output. Areas where traditional subsistence activities (e.g., hunting, reindeer herding, and fishing) predominate—such as in Greenland, northern Canada, northern Russia, and Scandinavia—have much lower economic output.

The industrial-scale extraction and limited processing of natural resources—oil, gas, minerals, and metals—is an important area of the Arctic states' economy.

Most importantly, Arctic Russia, Norway, Canada, and Alaska, have produced billions of cubic meters of oil and gas over recent decades.

Russia owns vast northern reserves of gold (found in the areas of Magadan and Chukotka), nickel (Murmansk, Krasnoyarsk), tin (Sakha, Chukotka), and diamonds (Sakha), as well as massive oil and gas fields, particularly in the Yamalo-Nenets and Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrugs. Likewise, Canada has developed considerable mineral and petroleum operations in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Nunavik. Alaska withdraws great quantities of oil from the Prudhoe Bay area of the state's northern coast, and Norway and Sweden have considerable northern mineral holdings.

## Tourism

During the past two centuries tourism has grown to become the single largest human presence in many Arctic regions. Visitors to the Arctic now greatly exceed their host population at many popular destinations, and Arctic communities are increasingly reliant on the jobs, income, and business revenues tourism generates. The Russian Arctic and part of Canadian Arctic are the general exceptions to this picture. Many Native Peoples, particularly those recently attaining self-rule, view tourism as a more sustainable economic endeavor than their historically tenuous dependence on either subsistence or resource extraction economies.

The extraordinarily diverse cultural and social settings of the Arctic region are also experiencing major changes. The attainment of self-rule, growing commitments to preserve cultural integrity especially language, customs, and art, and the need to create sustainable economies are critical issues faced by Native Peoples of the Arctic. Tourism impacts, both positive and negative, affect all those aspirations. Arctic residents are well acquainted with the difficulty of balancing cultural and social norms with the need for a viable economy. With the number of tourists now exceeding the population of rural settlements in some regions of the Arctic, the challenge of sustaining cultural values and ways of life competes with the need to provide jobs, income, and a market outlet for local goods and services. Furthermore, the brevity of the polar tourist season applies added pressure. In many instances an annual income must be earned in only a few months.

The cost of building, operating, and maintaining tourism infrastructure is a huge economic burden for Arctic communities and governments. Support facilities and services of all types are built and maintained to serve relatively large numbers of persons that exceed the resident population. Transport facilities, law enforcement, medical services, other emergency services, water and wastewater utilities, and waste collection and disposal incur capital and operating costs, require advanced work force skills, spare parts, and need specialized supplies in order to sustain their functions. Tourism normally occurs for a few months of the year, but the infrastructure must be maintained under adverse conditions for the entire year.

### Case Study: Norway

The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was NOK284.4bn (USD33.8bn), 9.1% of GDP in 2016, and is forecast to rise by 0.2% in 2017, and to rise by 2.0% pa to NOK349.0bn (USD41.5bn), 9.5% of GDP in 2027. In 2016, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by Visitor

exports generated NOK57.3bn (USD6.8bn), 5.4% of total exports in 2016 Travel & Tourism investment in 2016 was NOK29.8bn, 4.0% of total investment (USD3.5bn). It should rise by 0.4% in 2017, and rise by 2.4% pa over the next ten years to NOK37.8bn (USD4.5bn) in 2027, 4.2% of total. The industry was 12.7% of total employment (335,500 jobs). This is expected to fall by 2.1% in 2017 to 328,500 jobs and rise by 1.3% pa to 375,000 jobs in 2027 (13.3% of total)

### **Hydrocarbons, Minerals and Energy:-**

According to the US Geological Survey, the Arctic holds 13 per cent of the world's undiscovered oil resources (90 billion barrels of oil) and 30 per cent of the world's undiscovered gas resources (1,669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids). An estimated 84 per cent of these resources are located in offshore areas. Although oil and gas extraction is mentioned in all formal Arctic strategies, it is of clear primary importance for three states: Norway, the United States and Russia. These states regard hydrocarbon deposits in the Arctic as a vital element of their national energy security. The income gained through oil and gas development constitutes an extremely large percentage of Norwegian exports: 30.7% and 27.4% respectively. The Russian economy is similarly dependent in large part on its oil and gas, counting for nearly 70% of total exports and federal budget revenues. High demand and declining production have led Russia to search for new oil and gas fields, with most of these located in the Arctic. For the US, the development of Arctic resources can "reduce reliance on imported oil and strengthen [the] nation's energy security." Similarly, Norway calls the High North a "new energy province," and Russia officially regards the Arctic as its "strategic resource base." Despite such optimistic outlooks, however, many recent exploration projects have either been postponed or abandoned entirely.

### **Mining (A brief about the minerals resources of the Arctic region):-**

In addition to hydrocarbons, the Arctic is also rich in minerals, metals and rare earth elements. While the hype over hydrocarbons has received widespread attention in recent years, these other natural resources have not. While onshore development of Arctic minerals is already well advanced, there has been much less interest in offshore mining. Nevertheless, the increasing importance of resources such as rare earth minerals, coupled with the diminishing Arctic ice cap, means Arctic mineral resources are more economically viable and technologically accessible than ever.

### **Fisheries:-**

All Arctic actors pay special attention to fisheries as a subset of larger concerns surrounding biodiversity. Arctic states, for instance, have enacted a moratorium on

highseas fishing in the Arctic.<sup>121</sup> Greater attention has been paid to this issue because Arctic fish stocks are endangered by overfishing. Decreased sea ice levels allow easier access to the Arctic Ocean, which in turn incentivizes more fishing in the region. According to a Canadian study, “an estimated 950,000 tonnes of fish were caught in Russian, Canadian and US Arctic waters between 1950 and 2006, which is 75 times higher than reported by the United Nations agency that records catch levels.”

There are particular concerns about an increase in Chinese Arctic fishing. China is notorious for overfishing, and under-reporting catches, in its own waters. Should this behavior spread to the Arctic, then Chinese fishermen could seriously deplete Arctic fish stocks. Overfishing in the Arctic is especially dangerous because the food chain in the Arctic is shorter than elsewhere, and damage to one species would result in negative effects to the entire ecosystem. The economic impact of overfishing, alongside high social costs, would be disproportionately felt by the indigenous groups that heavily depend on fisheries for their livelihood.

### Territorial Claims

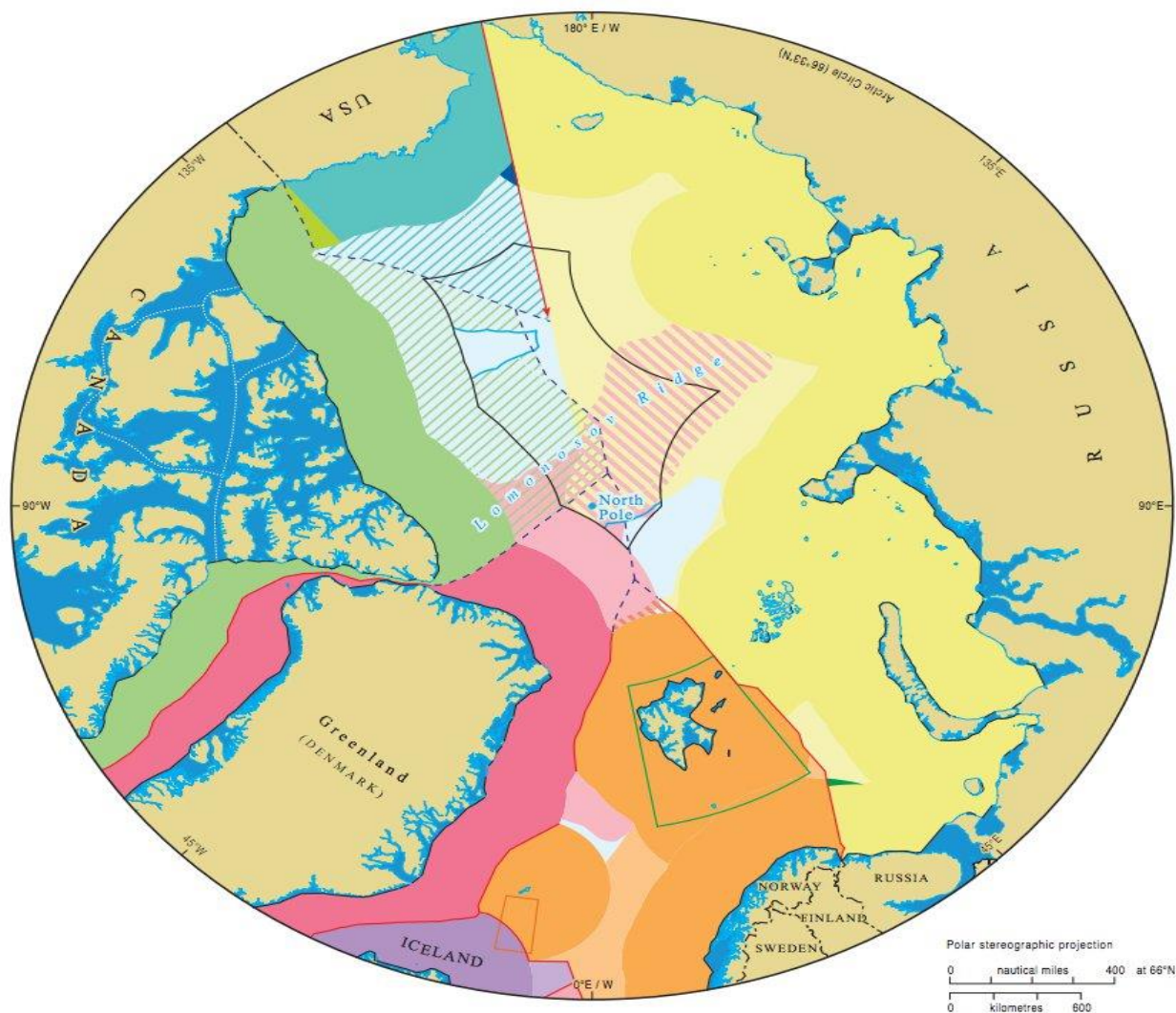
The Arctic has always been a place of contention for the nations surrounding it. As receding sea ice opens new sea routes, however, a comprehensive understanding of historical territorial disputes in the Arctic and the influence of the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) will be necessary. Canada was the first nation to claim vast swaths of territory in the Arctic Ocean in 1925. Not long after the Soviet Union followed suit, laying down their own claim in 1937. Though not yet passable by sea, control of Arctic territories was viewed as beneficial as it provided access to and providence over air routes. While moderately contested, Arctic territorial disputes would only become a marquee issue during the Cold War, when the region gained strategic significance as an area to base submarine-launched nuclear weapons.

Arctic nations’ ratification of UNCLOS and the end of the Cold War were catalysts for tension. Notably, the provisions of UNCLOS did not affect Arctic relations until climate change began in earnest because the majority of exclusive economic zones provided within it were practically inaccessible. However, as the ice has melted, the tenants of the Convention have failed to alleviate emerging territorial concerns. [Four of the five Arctic Nations have only recently ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas](#); the United States has still yet to do so.

As the waters warm, [the Convention has been used as a tool to entrench](#) territorial claims through UN appeals and report submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf UN Subcommittee (CLCS). In short, the interested parties are attempting to exploit the convention as a way to extend legitimate Arctic claims beyond the 200 nautical mile mark, as in Norway’s Submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). While Norway’s submission is based on independent negotiations with other Arctic states

to [extend beyond the 200 nautical mile mark](#), the most recent [Canadian](#), [Russian](#), and [Danish](#) submissions to the CLCS have been partial submissions, allowing states to make arguments for territorial extensions in the Arctic beyond the CLCS time limit of ten years following ratification of UNCLOS, as outlined in [article four](#) of Annex II of the Commission of the Limits of the Continental Shelf section of UNCLOS. This, coupled with the geography of the Arctic Ocean, makes Arctic relations more difficult as it pushes territorial disputes into the realm of global bureaucracy under a convention poorly designed for use at the top of the world.

However, among those disputes, the most intensified ones are: (i) regarding boundaries in the Beaufort Sea and the status of the Northwest Passage between the U.S. and Canada, (ii) regarding Hans Island between Canada and Denmark (via Greenland), (iii) regarding the Lomonosov Ridge – a mountain range across the region — among Canada, Denmark and Russia, (iv) and regarding the maritime border from the Bering Sea into the region between the U.S. and Russia. Therefore, all countries surrounding the region are involved in disputes regarding the ownership and control over different parts of the region. Along with these five Arctic countries, China and the UK are also involved in the dispute through their claims over the Svalbard archipelago, which happens to be within the region.



The Controversy regarding the UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Laws of Seas)

International treaties and customary international law are the key sources to determine maritime boundaries. As was indicated before, two international treaties – the UNCLOS and 1958 Convention on the Continental Shelf – can be relied upon setting the maritime disputes. The UNCLOS is important tool to determine sovereignty of the continental shelf. Article 280 of Section XV of the Convention urges countries to use “any peaceful means of their own choice” to resolve a dispute.

The implementation of the UNCLOS provisions relies on national legislation that sets certain provisions as priorities. This gives credit to national autonomy, but at the same time it proves to be risk and some nations may prefer different priorities from those set forth in the provisions of the UNCLOS. Moreover, it was previously indicated that seabed mining regime and the idea of profit sharing is highly criticized by nations and is viewed as opposite to free-market capitalism. In addition, it might be viewed as ineffective framework for border disputes in the Arctic, as not all Arctic states have ratified the convention.

The UNCLOS does not make specific reference to the Arctic. It only mentions ice-covered waters that can be perceived as suitable for the Arctic region. The Convention also ignores some special issues that rise in the polar ocean such as the management of high seas areas, the status of ice in international law, the interaction and overlap of regional and global regimes, the assertion of maritime jurisdiction over ice-covered waters (which are often distant from populated areas), and fails to address the impact that this has on maritime regulation and enforcement.

All in all, it is impossible to imagine an international Convention that makes all parties fully satisfied. The UNCLOS will continue to confront nations with challenges regarding compliance and harmonization with national legislature. There is no doubt that the UNCLOS has contributed to better governance of the oceans and has clarified the areas in which countries can exercise their sovereignty. In addition, it includes dispute settlement provisions which peacefully resolve overlapping claims among nations. It is crucial to realize that every benefit to exercise the rights given by the Convention comes with obligations, which are necessary to fulfill.



## Militarization in the Arctic



Image- Russia's new Arctic Trefoil base in Franz Josef Land, a remote region in the Arctic



Image- Thule Air Base in the Arctic

In the prevailing scenario, all the Arctic countries, which are involved in the territorial and maritime disputes among themselves, have been moving towards militarizing the region in order to acquire each of their respective objectives in the region.



In August 2015, the US permitted Shell to drill for oil in the Chukchi Sea, which falls within the periphery of Alaskan Arctic. The US “Coast Guard” has already deployed “sophisticated ships, aircrafts and other maritime assets” in the Alaskan Arctic for the duration of Shell’s drilling in the Arctic. Through such presence, the US is not only trying to exploit energy resources of the Arctic region, but also trying to keep its “military presence” deep inside the region.

The U.S. Army oversees three combat brigades in Alaska, each composed of roughly 3,000 soldiers. One brigade features paratroopers, another is in Stryker armored vehicles and a third is made up of reconnaissance troops.

On the other side, in 2007, Russian scientists dived to the seabed in the Arctic Ocean and planted a titanium Russian flag (Russia claimed that it was flag of Russia’s ruling party) in order to beef up their claims. Russia has already moved to restore a Soviet-era “military base” and other “military outposts” in the Arctic. In early 2015, Russia exercised Arctic “military patrols” from its Northern Fleet, involving “38,000 servicemen, more than 50 surface ships and submarines and 110 aircrafts.” More interestingly, Russia is currently planning to jointly explore for oil in Russia’s Arctic fields with China, which is increasingly becoming a strong “military power” besides being an economic giant. Through such move, Russia is trying to make sure that Russia has a “rising military power” like China involved into its stake in the Arctic region so that such cooperation favors Russia at the time of escalation of any “military conflict”.

Canada planned a deep water “naval facility” at Nanisivik, which lies at the entrance to the disputed Northwest Passage. Canada promised (under former PM Stephen Harper’s administration) to build armed ice-breakers, several patrol ships and several vessels in order to proceed towards gripping the Arctic. In 2011, Canada conducted large-scale “military exercises” in the region. A 235-strong contingent from the [4th Canadian Division](#) headed to the harsh environs of the [Arctic](#) to take part in the annual Northern Exercise (NOREX), a training program that aims to boost Canada’s military capabilities along its Arctic borders, from Feb. 4-17. It will simulate a first response to a major air disaster scenario in an Arctic location, with soldiers trained on how to plan for and respond to such a situation.

Denmark is prepared to invest millions of kroner to increase its military foothold in the Arctic, all in a bid to help address the growing challenges that are predicted to arise with the continued melting of the ice caps. The plans, which were the main points of the Arctic analysis report presented by the government, include

improved satellite surveillance, better communication, increased contributions from the Navy, and Canadian-style ‘ranger patrols’ in Greenland. The move, which is expected to initially cost 360 million kroner, and an additional 120 million kroner each year thereafter, has been fully endorsed by Dansk Folkeparti, Radikale and Socialdemokraterne.

Norwegian foreign secretary Jonas Gahr Støre already expressed that the presence of “military, navy and coastguard” in the region is necessary. The plan of Norway’s Government calls for the armored unit - still referred to as a cavalry battalion - to be stationed in the remote Porsanger district, in the far north on the edge of a long fjord leading into the Barents Sea, which also borders Russia. It also includes more investment in tanks, artillery and long-range precision weapons in the area and other locations further south, together with an extension of the time people have to spend in some national service positions to 16 from 12 months.

#### Risks of Increasing Intervention:

##### Threat to the Environment- Flora and Fauna, Climate Change and Natural Resources

The arctic environment faces several threats due to human interactions. It can be seen as an area that is rich in natural resources which is targeted for its oil, gas, and valuable minerals. This becomes a major threat to the arctic environment due to the disruption of the organism’s habitats as well as the leftover waste and oil spills destroying the environment. In several occasions oil spills have done severe damage to the environment in past, where birds, fish, and marine mammals were killed. The oil spill pollutes the environment and by causes a chain reaction of devastation in the ecosystem. Oil spills also cannot be completely contained and are very difficult to clean and fix the aftermath. Oil development can create life threatening levels of ocean noise pollution for marine mammals. Similarly with mining, toxic waste can be devastating to both the aquatic ecosystems and the terrestrial organisms.

Climate change is also a major factor in the destruction of the arctic environment. The temperature of the Arctic rises at twice the rate of the rest of the world. As a result, sea levels rise and permafrost and sea ice melt rapidly with climate change. Animals such as polar bears that depend on sea ice become threatened due to the loss of a major part of their environment. As sea ice melts, their natural habitat is destroyed due to their dependence on sea ice for shelter and rest. As the temperature rises, major damage occurs in the arctic environment.

Lastly, fishing can have major impacts on the arctic environment. Certain areas of the arctic suffer from high levels of illegal fishing or over-fishing. The life cycle of fish can be disrupted due to either stripping them of their caviar or construction of roads

and pipelines through salmon streams. Also, sometimes organisms are accidentally caught in fishing gear that results in them dying. This threatens the fish population and causes the fish industry to become an unsustainable resource.

### Threat to Global Security

It seems our globe does not lack reasons to engage in chaos. The two world wars began as European conflicts, only to turn gradually into world wars. Likewise, if the disputes over the control of the Arctic resources are not resolved quickly, it could turn into a larger military conflict that would not just involve the Arctic countries, but would also drag a larger part of the world into this conflict. And for sure, the start of such war would mean the cold, yet beautiful, Arctic region would become the targets of war machines—destroying the environment and the stability of the region and the globe.

Militarization of the region is likely to increase with almost all the countries increasing their military deployments and exercises, and there appears little hope and opportunity for any diplomatic resolution (or political agreement) of the disputes. In that event, the current non-hostile debate over the Arctic could turn into a violent confrontation. What is being done to improve the situation in the Arctic regions and is it enough?

There are several conservation efforts to help counteract the negative impacts of humanity as well as the rapid climate change. The health of the arctic ecosystem is important to both the local cultures of the arctic as well as people who value biodiversity and preserving the Earth.

Several organizations devote themselves to educating people and local cultures about arctic wildlife conservation procedures, as well as directly protecting organisms in danger. Educating future generations on habitat conservation is key to helping preserve the current ecosystem of the arctic. Improving the local communities' relationship with their environment is also an important method of ecosystem conservation. To do this, some organizations distribute educational materials to reduce bear human conflict and gather scientific information about bears. Also, they work to regulate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing at sea so the fish can become a sustainable resource for future generations. There are also efforts to protect species by making direct contact with them. An important species that this is being done for is the polar bear population. To ensure these key members of the food chain are safe from extinction, scientists monitor both the weight and movement of polar bears in the arctic. They are studied extensively to observe how different changing factors in their

environment are affecting their lifestyle. Adaptations and changes are monitored extensively in order to protect the polar bears future. As well as this, environmentalists work to clean effected ecosystems that have had oils spills, and help revert the damage done to the habitats. Humans interact with the arctic environment in both scientific labs and real life exposures.

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#### The Arctic Council

Established by the Ottawa Declaration in 1996, the Arctic Council is the preeminent intergovernmental forum for addressing issues related to the Arctic Region. The members of the Arctic Council include the eight countries with territory above the Arctic Circle (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Russian Federation, and the United States) plus six Permanent Participants (PP) groups representing the indigenous people of the Arctic, which include Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Arctic Indigenous Peoples of the North, and Sámi Council. The Arctic Council is not a treaty-based international organization but rather an international forum that operates on the basis of consensus, echoing the peaceful and cooperative nature of the Arctic Region. The Council focuses its work on matters related to sustainable development, the environment, and scientific cooperation; its mandate explicitly excludes military security. Traditionally, the Council is chaired by the foreign minister of the country holding the chairmanship. Its day-to-day work is carried out by the eight Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) and six PP representatives, with input from working groups, expert groups, and task forces other such Organizations and Cooperative frameworks include-

- 1- The Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)-:
- 2- Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)
- 3- The Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (e-PINE)

## Questions a Resolution must answer

- 1- How to reduce the increasing militarization of the region as well as the arms race prevailing here?
- 2- How to ensure that the increased militarization does not lead to confrontations among the nations, hostilities against each other leading to a Cold War?
- 3- How to prevent any threat to global peace and security due to tension in this region?
- 4- How to minimize the prevalent climate change effects like melting of the icebergs, reduction in the snowfall by year in the region and the consequent rise in global temperature and mean sea level?
- 5- How to solve the Geo-political issues regarding territorial claims by various countries in the region peacefully?
- 6- How to protect the natural resources of the region and stop this heritage of the whole world from getting destroyed?
- 7- How to bring up sustainable development in the region without threatening its natural riches?
- 8- At what pace should the commercial exploitation of the region be continued?
- 9- How to prevent other countries especially non-Arctic countries to get involved in this dispute, make their own bases or participate in the fierce competition for the natural resources of this region?