

Committee: Arctic Council

Issue: The militarization of the Arctic Region

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Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Aggeliki Fendaki, and it is a great honor to be serving as a Deputy President of the Arctic Council in this year's DSTMUN conference. Ever since my first MUN experience, I've always dreamt about being a Student Officer to take my MUN experience to the next level. What I find fascinating about MUN conferences is the opportunity to interact with other people and exchange different ideas and viewpoints. Moreover, MUN conferences, in general, offer you the chance to enhance your public skills as well as stand up and debate upon issues that have been discussed within the global community for years now.

For this reason, I am very excited about this year's topics, and especially about "The militarization of the Arctic Region". At this point, I would like to underline that the Arctic Council works as a crisis committee and thus you should be prepared for several crises during this year's session. Although this study guide will introduce you and will help you understand the main aspects of this topic, you should do your own research in order to be fully informed about it. Therefore, I truly encourage you to research and broaden your knowledge on the topic. Should any questions arise, please don't hesitate to contact me via email at aggelikifendaki@gmail.com. I am more than happy to help you!

I am looking forward to meeting you all at this year's DSTMUN.

Yours Truly,

Aggeliki Fendaki

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Located near the north pole and surrounded by the Arctic Ocean, the Arctic Region is somewhat isolated from the rest of the world mostly covered with snow and ice. It includes the northernmost points of the Russian Federation, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Greenland, Canada, as well as the United States. It is widely known that the region has been suffering from climate change and global warming for some time now, with its temperature having risen with twice the speed of all other regions in the world based on an estimation from the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment. Despite not being owned by any state, the Arctic Region possesses economic, military, and environmental significance, leading to disputes between participating countries and there have been claims over common territories between a few countries in the past. For that reason, the Arctic Council was formed with the previously mentioned states as permanent member states and a few other nations as observer states with no voting rights.

While the cooperation has worked quite well for years, new challenges are emerging, which require very careful management by all parties involved. Climate change brings greater opportunities for trade, research and even travel and tourism in the region. These opportunities, in turn, mobilize and push the states involved to a greater presence, both governmental and military, in the region. Considering Russia's increasing militarization and China's growing interest in the region, as well as the fact that several countries of the Arctic Council are members of NATO, the complexity of the issue becomes apparent. It has become therefore highly significant to establish a legal framework, to ensure that there will not be any conflict and disputes in the region influenced by the current situation in the area, since it will not only save a vast amount of the Earth's oil resources, but it is also going to increase the danger of ice melting and global warming becoming an even more serious phenomenon.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Arctic States

The Arctic States (Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States of America) are the eight active members of the Arctic Council. They have territories within the Arctic and thus carry the dominating role in the region. Their national jurisdictions and international law govern the lands surrounding the arctic Ocean and its waters.

Militarization

“The act of assembling and putting into readiness for war or other emergency” or simply “The process of becoming ready for conflict or war”¹

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

“The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) defines an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as generally extending 200 nautical miles from shore, within which the coastal state has the right to explore and exploit, and the responsibility to conserve and manage, both living and non-living resources.”²

International Waters

“In short, international waters are areas of the sea or ocean that are too far under any nation’s jurisdiction. Since they are beyond the nation’s reach, no one “owns” them. You may have heard them referred to as the high seas or the open seas. Generally, international waters start around 200 nautical miles from the country’s shoreline and continue outward. To complicate it more, international waters are usually broken into sections, and different countries have various rights concerning these sections.”³

Territorial Waters

“Territorial waters, in international law, are areas of the sea immediately adjacent to the shores of a state and subject to the territorial jurisdiction of that state. Territorial waters are thus to be distinguished on the one hand from the high seas, which are common to all countries, and on the other from internal or inland waters, such as lakes wholly surrounded by the national territory or certain bays or estuaries.”⁴

Natural Resources

¹ "Militarization - Dictionary Definition". *Vocabulary.Com*, 2021, <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/militarization>.

² "WTO | Glossary - Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)". *Wto.Org*, 2021, https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/glossary_e/exclusive_economic_zone_eez_e.htm.

³ "International Waters Laws, Territories & Zones | Naylor Law". *Law Offices Of Charles D. Naylor*, 2021, <https://naylorlaw.com/blog/international-waters-laws/>.

⁴ "Territorial Waters | International Law". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/territorial-waters>.

“Natural resources are materials created in nature that are used and usable by humans, they include natural substances (e.g., soil, water) and energy supplies (e.g., coal, gas) that serve to satisfy human needs and wants.”⁵

Continental Shelf

“A continental shelf is the edge of a continent that lies under the ocean. A continental shelf extends from the coastline of a continent to a drop-off point called the self-break. From the break, the shelf descends toward the deep ocean floor in what is called the continental slope. Even though they are underwater, continental shelves are part of the continent. The actual boundary of a continent is not the coastline, but the edge of the continental shelf.”⁶

Northwest Passage

“The Northwest Passage is a framed sea route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean through a group of sparsely populated Canadian islands known as the Arctic Archipelago. Climate change has caused Arctic ice cover to thin in recent years, opening the passage to marine shipping.”⁷

Northern Sea Route (NSR)

“The Northern Sea Route, or the Northeast Passage, is a shipping lane officially defined by Russian legislation between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean specifically running along the Russian Arctic coast from Murmansk on the Barents Sea, along Siberia, to the Bering Strait and Far East. The route lies in Arctic waters and parts are free of ice for only two months per year. Along with the warming in the Arctic, the passage can be used more and more for shipping.”⁸

Contiguous Zone

“A contiguous zone-which must be claimed and, unlike territorial seas, does not exist automatically-allows coastal states to exercise the control necessary to

⁵ "Natural Resources". *Geo.Fu-Berlin.De*, 2021, https://www.geo.fu-berlin.de/en/v/geolearning/glossary/natural_resources/index.html.

⁶ Society, National. "Continental Shelf". *National Geographic Society*, 2021, <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/continental-shelf/>.

⁷ "Northwest Passage". *HISTORY*, 2021, <https://www.history.com/topics/exploration/northwest-passage>.

⁸ "Northern Sea Route - Barentsinfo". *Barentsinfo.Org*, 2021, <https://www.barentsinfo.org/barents-region/Transport/Northern-Sea-Route>.

prevent and punish infringement of customs, sanitary, fiscal and immigration regulations within and beyond its territory or territorial sea.”⁹

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Arctic Region during the Cold War

During the Cold War, the Arctic was at the focus of a strategic competition. The Arctic territories, which were army bases of the Russian Northern Fleet and two-thirds of Soviet-built nuclear submarines, witnessed increased military escalation between the two superpowers. Both ballistic and cruise missile systems have been tested in the Barents Sea region, while nuclear testing have been conducted in the area east of Novaya Zemlya. Between 1955 and 1990, 130 nuclear tests were conducted by the USSR in the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, or North test sites.

The strategic imperative of the Arctic changed dramatically with the end of the Cold War. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Arctic States concentrated their discussions on non-military security issues such as environmental deterioration and economic decline. The focus of Arctic relations on sustainable development and technical cooperation has resulted in a de-escalation of tensions in what was previously one of the world's most heavily militarized areas.

The Arctic Region nowadays

Arctic countries need to continue working together to handle mutual concerns and resolve territorial conflicts through diplomatic means. The re-emergence of the Arctic on the world agenda, as well as the potential spill over of tensions between Russia and NATO members, but also China's growing involvement, might turn the Arctic into a battleground for geopolitical rivalry. More specifically during the last years, the five Arctic littoral States-Canada, Denmark, Norway, the Russian Federation, and the USA- have increased their military training in the Region, but they have also established Arctic defense policies, which illustrate that the military emphasis in the region will increase.

The increasing presence and capability development and employment of military forces by all Arctic-Five (A-5) states, has been characterized as the “Militarization” of the Arctic. And while this in harsh environment and remote areas, such as the Arctic Region, can be very advantageous since the military is often the only force which can operate under difficult circumstances for search and rescue of human lives in the event of a natural or even a maritime or aviation disaster, if military

⁹ "International Law - The Responsibility Of States". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/international-law/The-responsibility-of-states#ref266209>.

competition and national selfishness prevail, incidents caused by the increasing concentration, and activation of military forces, as well as environmental damage especially due to the development of the countries' nuclear arsenal, will indicate that the militarization can have severe consequences.

Even though all national strategies underline the region's current stability and peaceful cooperation, state sovereignty is a priority for all five Arctic Ocean littoral governments, which aim at increasing their continental shelf claims in the Arctic Ocean. These countries have economic and security interests in the region which could jeopardize the region's tenuous stability, therefore cooperation among them is of vital importance.



Figure 1: Arctic territorial claims

The Security impact of Climate Change on the Arctic

The Arctic has been warming at nearly double the world rate since 1980, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its most recent assessment report (IPCC, 2014). The unprecedented rate at which sea ice is melting creates new shipping and fishing opportunities as well as challenges such as the overexploitation of the Region and the protection of the indigenous population, all of which will have a significant impact on the region's strategic importance. By the middle of this century, climate change is anticipated to result in a nearly ice-free Arctic Ocean in late summer and enhanced navigability of Arctic marine waters. This steady melting of ice (Figure 2) offers new economic opportunities, such as trade and travel while also posing new security risks due to the competition of governments to ensure if not to increase their sphere of influence and the interests of their states. Furthermore, the untapped resources available in the Arctic-an estimated 25% of the

world's oil and gas reserves-have generated a strong commercial interest in the region. Projections suggest that the melting ice will give all five Arctic littoral states increased maritime access to their current exclusive economic zones. Additionally, Non-Arctic states are taking a greater interest in the region, attracted by economic opportunities such as shipping, fishing, and energy. This creates new geopolitical challenges that must be managed carefully. These challenges include both traditional security concerns linked to the deployment of military assets in the Arctic, as well as those created by the prospective exploitation of the arrest geographical area of untapped hydrocarbon reserves remaining on Earth.

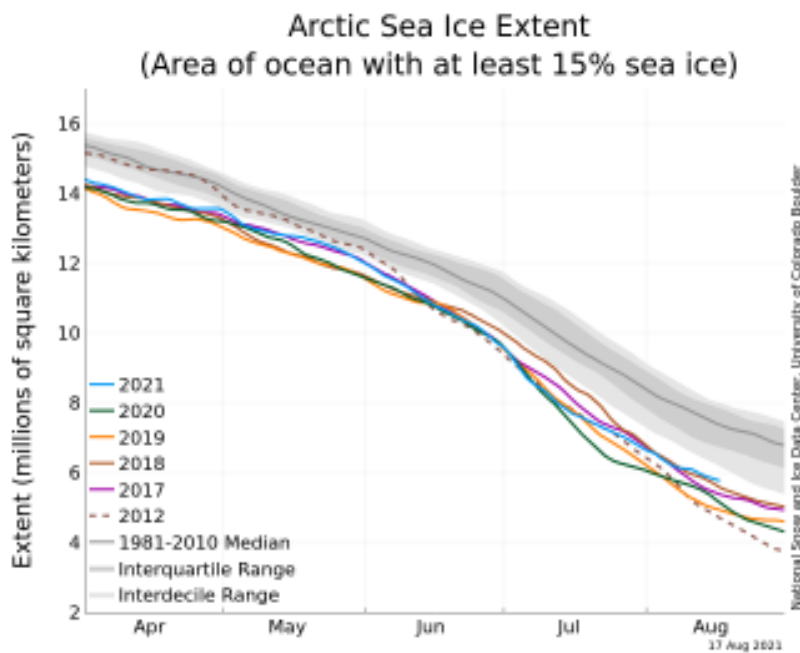


Figure 2: The steady melting of ice in the Arctic Region

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Canada

Canada's national identity, wealth, security, and interests are all shaped by the Arctic. Canada has been active on several fronts to augment its military presence and experience in the region as well. Since 2007, Canada has conducted annually Operation Nanook, a multi-service training exercise designed to protect and to exercise capabilities within its Arctic national borders. The continued development of the Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships, although somewhat uncertain of particulars, is a new region-specific capability for the Canadian Navy. Plans for new surveillance systems, including satellites and underwater aspects, further demonstrate Ottawa's determination to increase its monitoring of Arctic movements in its waters.

China

The resources of the Arctic, as well as the Northern Sea Route's potential impact on commercial and diplomatic relations between Asia, Europe, and North America, are boosting non-Arctic countries' involvement, such as China, in regional affairs. Beijing is interested in profiting from the new sea routes that will emerge because of global warming. China is also interested in improving its ability to exploit Arctic mineral resources and fishing waters as a non-Arctic state. In addition, China is building alliances with a wide range of regional allies to ensure that it will have a voice in future Arctic issues. More specifically, it has stepped up diplomatic relations with Nordic countries such as Iceland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden in recent years.

Norway

Norway's Arctic strategy centers around security, stability, and interest-based international cooperation, and is founded on a long tradition of defending Norway's interests in the north through broad-based international cooperation. It also focuses on interactions with neighboring countries in the Barents region, Finland's, Norway's, and Sweden's northernmost territories, as well as the growth of North Norway. The best way to protect Norwegian interests in the Arctic is to continue to build North Norway as a strong, vibrant, and capable region. Because the region is rich in natural resources that contribute to the country's overall economic growth, the region's economy and social development are of national importance.

Russian Federation

The new strength and breadth of Russia's access-denial strategy increasingly enables Moscow to threaten distant targets without deploying traditional power projection. The Arctic may still be relatively free of Russian maritime or air forces, but it can potentially become a base from which Moscow can threaten targets of strategic value in the Arctic and as far away as the North Atlantic and Europe. Furthermore, the country's application submitted to the UN in 2015 claiming a large extended continental shelf as far as the North Pole based on the Lomonosov Ridge and Mendeleev Ridges within the Arctic sector and the symbolic planting of the Russian flag at the bottom of the North Pole in 2007, not only stirred sensitivities over ownership of the Arctic and demonstrated Moscow's military advantages, but they also indicated the nation's efforts to increase their continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean.

United States of America

The United States' Arctic policy outlines how the army will recruit, train, organize, and equip its forces to work with Arctic allies to protect national interests and maintain regional stability. The Arctic, a vital area containing many of the

country's natural resources and key shipping channels, is a platform for projecting global power and a potential avenue of attack in conflict. As a result, operating in the region allows the army to powerfully project its forces to enhance its ability to respond in competition, crisis, and/or conflict. However, the fact that the USA has not ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea can be interpreted in two ways: either it does not have any rights to an EEZ, or it disregards all the other nations' rights to an EEZ, therefore being able to exploit the whole region.

European Union

The European Union has a long history of involvement in the Arctic. Climate change and Arctic protection, as well as sustainable development and international cooperation, are the major areas that guide its Arctic strategy and projects. Even though the Union does not have formal observer status in the Arctic Council, member states such as Finland, Sweden, and the Kingdom of Denmark, as well as Iceland and Norway, which are members of the European Economic Area and participate in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, are among the eight active member states of the Council.

NATO

In 2013, NATO rejected the idea of establishing a strong direct military presence in the Arctic High North. However, because NATO is a collective security organization with five members that are also Arctic countries and two close allies such as Finland and Sweden with Arctic territory, they are being pressured into considering the implications of Russia's recent aggressive military behaviour. Moreover, concerns about a NATO Arctic policy have been raised once again, while Allied member states and Arctic littoral governments have differing opinions on whether a NATO Arctic strategy is necessary. While some call for a stronger NATO presence in the Arctic, others have expressed worries that adopting a regional policy would allow non-Arctic Allies a say in the region's affairs. However, as Arctic ice continues to melt and other non-NATO countries re-evaluate their Arctic postures, NATO should coordinate an effort among member states to establish a consistent, cohesive NATO Arctic policy and to increase its situational awareness in the High North.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1909	Canada claims the Arctic Archipelago.
April 15, 1926	The Soviet Union claims large quantity of land.

1939-1945	The Battle of the Atlantic during World War II.
December 17, 1973	Denmark and Canada submit an agreement on the delimitation of the continental shelf between Greenland and Canada to the UN.
October 1, 1987	The USSR names six goals for its Arctic foreign policy.
January 11, 1988	The US and Canada agree on their cooperation for the Arctic Region.
June 24, 1996	Norway ratified UNCLOS.
March 12, 1997	The Russian Federation ratified UNCLOS.
November 7, 2003	Canada ratified UNCLOS.
November 16, 2004	Denmark ratified UNCLOS.
August 2, 2007	Two bathyscaphes (MIR-1 and MIR-2) descend to the Arctic seabed beneath the North Pole and place a Russian flag.
May 28, 2008	The Ilulissat Declaration is announced by the Arctic Ocean Conference.
September 15, 2010	Norway signs a treaty with the Russian Federation aimed to set their issues aside.
November 2013	Russia asks for permission from the UN to oversee Arctic jurisdiction and let the Lomonosov Ridge to be recognized as Russia's territory.
December 1, 2014	Russia creates a military body specialized for the Arctic Region.
January 2018	China becomes a self-declared "near-Arctic State".

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is one of the most influential documents regarding the region and its territorial disputes. The Law of the Sea, as it is referred to, has imposed coastal state authority and administration over the Arctic region. To be exact, it gave coastal nations permission to conduct

marine scientific research, to enact laws and regulations in exclusive economic zones that extended up to 200 nautical miles from their respective Arctic coastlines, as well as rules that applied to their respective maritime territories in the region.

The Ottawa Declaration

With the Ottawa Declaration signed by the representatives of the Arctic States on September 19th, 1996, the Arctic Council was established as a high-level forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic. It was also agreed that decisions of the Arctic Council are to be by consensus of the Member states and that the Arctic Council should not deal with matters related to military security.

The Ilulissat Declaration

Announced on May 28, 2008, the five Arctic littoral states met at the political level during the Arctic Ocean Conference in Ilulissat to discuss the Arctic Ocean, climate change, the protection of the marine environment, maritime safety and division of emergency responsibilities if new shipping routes opened. One of the chief goals in the declaration was blockage of any new comprehensive international legal regime to govern the Arctic Ocean and the orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims. However, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and the Arctic indigenous people were not involved in the Ilulissat negotiations.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Despite the topics which are addressed and discussed not only between the eight members of the Arctic Council, but also between the Arctic 5 following the Ilulissat Declaration, there are also some bilateral agreements to enhance cooperation between the nations and to avoid disputes in the region. The most significant ones are the following:

Arctic Cooperation Agreement between Canada and the United States

The main subject addressed in this agreement concerns the icebreaker issue, such as the icebreaker navigation. Both representatives of the two nations recognised the interests and responsibilities of their countries as neighbouring states in the Arctic and the benefits of cooperating to improve development and security in the region. Additionally, they affirmed that navigation and resource development in the Arctic must not adversely affect the unique environment of the region and the well-being of its inhabitants. To conclude, they agreed that nothing in that agreement of

cooperative endeavour between Arctic neighbours and friends nor any practice thereunder will affect the respective positions of the two Governments on the UNCLOS in that or other maritime areas or their respective positions regarding third parties.

Treaty between the Kingdom of Norway and the Russian Federation with aim to set their differences aside

The main issues addressed in this treaty are in respect to the maritime delimitation in the Arctic Ocean and in the Barents Sea regarding especially fishery matters and hydrocarbon deposits. Both nations acknowledged the benefits of maintaining and strengthening the good neighbourly relations and considering the developments in the Arctic Ocean as well as the role of the parties in the region, they recalled, in accordance with international law, the primary interest and responsibility as coastal states for the conservation and rational management of the living resources of the Barents Sea and in the Arctic Ocean.

The Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR)

The Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR) is a military forum, which offers a venue for discussing security issues in the Arctic. It is currently the only military forum focused on the Arctic region's security dynamics and architecture, as well as the full range of military capabilities and cooperation. The participants from 11 European and North American nations that take part in the meeting discuss the role of the Arctic Council, the European Union and NATO, and those organizations' aims at fostering governance and cooperation in the region. Each participating nation detail its own national Arctic strategy, senior representatives from NATO present the alliance's current Arctic outlook, and the participants address important transportation and environmental issues. However, Russia has not participated in the annual meetings since 2014 as Western sanctions following Russia's annexation of Crimea preclude its participation.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Evaluating the Current Strategic Plan of the Arctic Council

Due to the alternating leadership system, the Arctic Council undertakes far too many initiatives without a reliable way to assess their performance and effectiveness. Each chairmanship usually introduces new and separate projects and undertakings to the Council's to-do list. Given that the Council lacks the discipline to establish clear action priorities and that it does not possess the needed resources for many of its ongoing activities, several projects remain incomplete. Therefore, a reevaluation of

the current action plan, its contents, and its prospects for success based on the numerous projects and operations, all leading to a written document outlining the plan of the Council, is needed.

Adopting a new Treaty under the auspices of the UN

Since the Arctic Council cannot enforce the implementation of its current strategic plan, even though the issues addressed in the agenda are of utmost importance for the whole global community, an agreement under the auspices of the UN, such as the UNCLOS should be envisaged and ratified. There in, both the national interests of the Arctic countries but also their responsibilities to safeguard sustainable development of the region in favor of the global community, shall be recognized and defined.

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