

Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee (GA1)

Topic: The militarization of the Arctic Region

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Position: Co-chair

Personal Introduction

Dear Delegates,

My name is Niki Ktistaki, I am 16 years old and I attend Costeas-Geitonas School. I am really excited and honored to be serving as a Co-Chair in the Disarmament and International Security Committee of the 8th CSMUN. This will be my second time as a Student Officer, and I find this conference the perfect opportunity to enrich my MUN career and develop as an MUNer.

Both topics that are going to be discussed and debated upon during the conference are really interesting and crucial. I hope that this study guide will prove really helpful for you, in order to better understand the topic of The Militarization of the Arctic Region. However, I would like to remind you, that although this study guide is an important tool for you, both before and during the conference, you are encouraged to conduct further personal research on the topic.

I understand that you may face difficulties while researching on the topic or have any questions regarding the Study Guide. I am always at your disposal if you need any help, so don't hesitate to contact me; my email address is nikiktistaki@gmail.com

Yours truly,



Niki Ktistaki

Topic Introduction

The Arctic Region is defined by the Arctic Circle, which includes the ice-covered Arctic Ocean and the lands and seas who surround it. These lands are parts of the 8 bordering countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, the United States (Alaska), Canada, Denmark (Greenland), and Iceland.

The Arctic Region, over the past few decades has become the ultimate place where world powers compete for resources. Under the ice, lays a vast wealth of oil, natural gas and minerals including iron, gold, copper, titanium and nickel, manganese, diamonds, among others. According to the United States Geological Survey, more than 22% of the world's oil is located in the Arctic. Thus, the melting of the polar ice caps along with the technology developments that make resource extraction affordable and less time consuming has created many new trade and resource extraction opportunities for the bordering countries.

Apart from the extraction of the natural resources found in the Arctic, the melting of the ice, has created new shipping routes that will allow vessels to travel between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in much less time saving millions of funds. Furthermore, countries have started their military expansion in the region and try to claim parts of the Arctic in order to protect their interests and take advantage of them.

Overall, the Arctic has become the newest area in which Member States will compete for power in trade, resources and military presence in the Arctic Region and the waters that surround it.

Therefore, it is important to ensure that a legal framework is implemented in the Arctic Region with the aim of ensuring that it will not become a place of conflict and disputes, motivated by state-led intentions to exploit its natural resources, like



the other parts of the world. This guide will further elaborate on the different policies of the countries and organizations involved that make this quite difficult to be achieved- with the USA, Russia, China and the EU being actively involved in the issue.



Image 1: The geopolitical map of the Arctic¹

¹Spohr , Alexandre Piffero, et al. “The Militarization of the Arctic: Political, Economic and Climate Challenges .” UFRGS Model United Nations Journal, <https://www.ufrgs.br/ufrgsmun/2013/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Militarization-of-the-Arctic-Political-Economic-and-Climate-Changes.pdf>.

Definition of key terms

Arctic Circle

“The Arctic Circle is one of the five major circles of latitude that mark maps of the Earth. This is the parallel of latitude that (in 2000) runs 66.56083 degrees north of the Equator. Everything north of this circle is known as the Arctic, and the zone just to the south of this circle is the Northern Temperate Zone.”²

Arctic Council

It is the primary intergovernmental forum in the Arctic Region and it was founded in 1996. It consists of the 8 Arctic States, 6 Permanent Participants, 6 Working Groups and 38 Observers.

Arctic States

The Arctic States are the bordering countries Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, the United States (Alaska), Canada, Denmark (Greenland), and Iceland, which are also members of the Arctic Circle.

Indigenous People

“Indigenous populations are communities that live within, or are attached to, geographically distinct traditional habitats or ancestral territories, and who identify themselves as being part of a distinct cultural group, descended from groups present in the area before modern states were created and current borders defined. They

²“Arctic Circle.” *ScienceDaily*, ScienceDaily,
www.sciencedaily.com/terms/arctic_circle.htm.



generally maintain cultural and social identities, and social, economic, cultural and political institutions, separate from the mainstream or dominant society or culture.”³

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.”⁴

Territory

“Land or sometimes sea, that is considered as belonging to or connected with a particular country or person”⁵. “Territory is a crucial element to create and maintain a State. In order for a State to practice its sovereignty, it must have a territory where its authority is the strongest”.⁶

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

“An Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is a concept adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1982), whereby a coastal State assumes jurisdiction over the exploration and exploitation of marine resources in its adjacent

³“Indigenous Populations.” *World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, 7 Dec. 2010, www.who.int/topics/health_services_indigenous/en/.

⁴ “Militarization - Dictionary Definition.” *Vocabulary.com*, www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/militarization.

⁵ “TERRITORY: Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/territory.

⁶ Spohr , Alexandre Piffero, et al. “The Militarization of the Arctic: Political, Economic and Climate Challenges.” *UFRGS Model United Nations Journal*, <https://www.ufrgs.br/ufrgsmun/2013/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Militarization-of-the-Arctic-Political-Economic-and-Climate-Changes.pdf> .



section of the continental shelf, taken to be a band extending 200 miles from the shore”.⁷ Inside the borders of the EEZ a country has full rights to all the resources bellow the ocean’s surface, like resource extraction and fishing. Ships are allowed to pass through the EEZ but they cannot extract any resources.

Territorial Waters

Waters in a 12-mile band from the coast line in which country can apply laws and regulation and has full rights to all things at and below the water's surface.

International Waters

These are the waters outside territorial waters. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has set some specific guidelines for the use of international waters. Firstly, the activity of any ship is subject to the jurisdiction and legislation of the vessel's country of origin. There is also "universal jurisdiction," according to which any country can bring criminal charges, regardless of nationality or where the crime took place. This is usually applied in cases of war crimes, genocide, and other very serious matters.

Continental Shelf

These are the waters which are geographically part of the mainland and not the ocean, which can be claimed by the neighboring country for exploitation of natural resources .

Northwest Passage

⁷ Directorate, OECD Statistics. “EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ).” *OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms - Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Definition*, 4 Mar. 2003, stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=884.



“The Northwest Passage is a sea route that connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. In the past, the Northwest Passage has been virtually impassable because it was covered by thick, year-round sea ice. However, in recent years, climate change is allowing commercial traffic to pass through the Arctic via this once-impossible route.”⁸

Natural Resources

Every resource available without human interference, like water, atmosphere, sunlight and land.

Global Ocean Conveyor Belt

It is a constantly moving system of deep-ocean circulation driven by temperature and salinity. The ocean is not a still body of water and thus there is constant motion, which is caused by a combination of thermohaline currents (thermo = temperature; haline = salinity) in the deep ocean and wind-driven currents on the surface. Thus, the cold and salty water sinks to the bottom of the ocean while warmer water remains on the surface.

Background Information

The exploration of the Arctic in modern times – The strategic importance which led to the militarization of the area

Before the 19th century commercial routes were growing in importance and the search for alternative sea routes was crucial. Europeans started multiple

⁸King, Hobart M. “What Is the Northwest Passage?” *Geology.com*, geology.com/articles/northwest-passage.shtml.



expeditions to find a passage that could connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the Arctic ocean. In 1732, the Great Northern Expeditions were organized by the Russian Admiralty along the coast of Siberia to find the Northeast Passage. Around the same time thousands of kilometers of the Arctic were mapped.

After the exploration of the Arctic, many European countries that were involved in the explorations wanted to claim the territories. Territorial expansion and control were one of the priorities of the countries that claimed sections of the Arctic. With time, more and more countries started showing their interest in the Arctic, mainly because of the natural resources in the region.

Late 19th century and early 20th century

The technological developments of the time led to the augmentation of production and thus the need for new markets and raw material sources was created. During World War I, the exploration of the Arctic was much more crucial in order to control new routes for the transportation of weapons, the passage of military ships and of the armies and to reach other markets. During World War II, the Arctic became a primary strategic area.

Cold War

During this time, the Arctic Region underwent a major transformation in its strategic and political significance. The new main powers of the area were the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), who were the victor powers of World War II. The main factor that played major role in the strategic significance of the Arctic was the fact that it presented the shortest distance between these two antagonistic powers. As the United States and the Soviet Union were territorial neighbors in the Arctic Region, it became a stage for tight military escalation between them. Through the production of nuclear-powered attack submarines and the threat of cruise missiles carried by bomber planes, these two powers tried to build up their capabilities in the Region.



Lastly, the Arctic was really important to the Soviet Navy as well. The Soviet Northern Fleet, that was founded in 1932 and its goal was to protect the Soviet northwestern region and maintain the sea lines of communication, became vital for the Soviet Union, when World War 2 was ahead. By the end of the war, it was a really powerful aspect of the Soviet Navy, having access to high and warm seas. Additionally, the Northern Fleet could communicate with the Pacific Fleet through routes in the Arctic Ocean, receiving two thirds and one third of all Soviet-build nuclear submarines.

After the Cold War, new approaches have been taken in order to solve the disputes and conflicts that were arising in the Arctic. However, the recent technological and economic developments have brought new tension to the issue.

Strategic importance and Military Activity since 1990

Military Activity in the Arctic underwent many changes. A main one was that many of the Northern Fleet submarines (now Russian) were decommissioned, meaning that they were taken out of use. In 1990, they were handed to Canada by the US and in 1993 a formal deactivation ceremony took place in Tuktoyaktuk, Canada. A key point in the history of the Arctic was the foundation of the Arctic Council in 1996. From this point on countries started considering not only the strategic importance of the Arctic Region but its economic profitability as well (oil and gas resources, shorter routes).

Within this framework, the importance of the strategic role of the Arctic Region on the economic growth and empowerment of the neighboring states, is becoming more and more important due to a factor that some years ago nobody could have predicted, the climate change. The climate in the Arctic Region changes as decades pass and the melting of the ice caps means that the Arctic becomes more accessible and open to human activity and interference. Therefore, the Arctic becomes more and more an area of huge strategic importance, as of the increased access and extraction of natural resources and the creation of new transport routes,



that have arisen after the transformation of the ice and snow conditions in the area. According to a 2008 report of the United States Geological Survey, the areas north of the Arctic Circle hold close to 90 billion barrels of oil, 47 trillion cubic meters of natural gas and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids.

A very characteristic example on how climate change escalates the geopolitical significance of the Arctic Region is the Northwest Passage. In the past, the Northwest Passage was impassable, now with the melting of the ice the passage could be used for ship passages for at least some parts of the year. Opening the Northwest Passage to commercial ocean traffic (ships and vessels passing through), would have a global impact on transportation, trade, natural resources and commercial relationships between countries. Many long distances would be minimized making the transportation from one place to another easier and quicker. For instance, it is estimated that by opening the Northwest Passage, the distance between London and Tokyo would be cut to less than 12,870 km from the 23,600 km that it was before. Moreover, the Northwest Passage might allow to larger vessels to pass through, allowing more goods to be transported from and to the Arctic.





Image 2: The route of the Northwest Passage⁹

As a result, many countries, especially the Arctic States want to take advantage of the Arctic, its natural resources and strategic position.

The conflicts that arise in the Arctic and the current military activity

As the importance of the Arctic Region increases and more global attention is drawn on the economic and geopolitical advantages of the region, more conflicts arise in the Arctic between the Arctic States that surround it. The countries of the Arctic Council clearly recognize the significance of the Arctic and the economic and political benefits that may occur. The Arctic is now more open to human activity, like commercial shipping and trade, oil and gas exploration, natural resources extraction

⁹The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Northwest Passage." Encyclopaedia Britannica, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1 Aug. 2016, www.britannica.com/place/Northwest-Passage-trade-route.

and operations in land, sea or sky, creating many more opportunities for conflicts among the Arctic States to occur. The prospect of profit from these undiscovered and yet untouched resources and lands, could create an international race for the Arctic States so as to take advantage of them and profit financially and politically.

Another key aspect is the military and territorial disputes arising in the Arctic. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is of utmost importance when it comes to the territorial disputes and the military activity in the Arctic. The UNCLOS is a treaty that covers many aspects related to sea matters, like piracy, trade regulations, territorial waters and economic activity in national and international waters.

Another major problem is that some uses of the Arctic are allowed while some others are not. For example, exploration for scientific purposes is allowed whilst the exploitation of natural resources is not. Thus, a problem that may occur is when a country claims to use the land for scientific research but ends up using it for other purposes. Nevertheless, this causes a much bigger problem concerning the international cooperation in the Arctic; the possibility that anytime a war may arise.

Most of the military conflicts in the Arctic are a result of Russia's behavior. Military presence in the Arctic has been increased since 2007, when the Russian Polar Expedition took place and a Russian flag was put in the Arctic seabed. This event alarmed the other Arctic States that were to benefit economically from the Arctic Region. The military power and developments of Russia are raising concerns among the Arctic States.

However, since the international system is not organized and States are not subjects to any legal structure ("because some States can at any time use the force, all States have to be prepared to do it – or otherwise live at the mercy of its neighbors



being militarily stronger”)¹⁰, their relations are relations of power, with the occurrence of a war, always being a possibility. Thus, the countries could never be completely sure of others’ intentions or actions, as the causes for dispute are many and could easily change. Therefore, the priority of each State is to survive and that is why it seeks territorial integrity and political autonomy. Therefore, when States are threatened, they tend to use their military power and achieve their goals through violence.

The tensions regarding territorial claims and economic gains creates friction among the Arctic Five (Norway, Denmark, Russia, Canada and the United States). The fact that the international system is anarchic and the countries are sovereign, meaning that they have ultimate power, can provoke risks of incidents that can lead to military confrontation. Russia is now characterized as “the most determined and assertive player in the region”¹¹, who plays an important role in the policies of the other Arctic powers.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the possibility of a conflict is much smaller now than it was a few years ago. This is because the Arctic States have started cooperating and communicating in combination with the guidelines set by the Arctic Council and the UNCLOS.

For instance, in 2013 all Arctic States created an Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic, taking into consideration the provisions of the UNCLOS. The purpose of the agreement was to establish collaboration between the States and protect the marine environment of the Arctic from oil pollution. In the agreement many points were discussed, like monitoring, requests for Assistance and Coordination and Cooperation in Response

¹⁰ Waltz 2002, 144-145

¹¹ Smith 2011b, 120



Operations and the Movement and Removal of Resources across Borders, among others.



Image 3: Arctic territorial claims¹²

The impact of militarization on the environment and the people of the Arctic

It is obvious to state that militarization in the Arctic would have many negative consequences both on its environment and the indigenous people that live in the Region.

¹²“The Arctic Is Now A Frozen Conflict.” Business Insider, Business Insider, 20 Dec. 2014, www.businessinsider.com/the-arctic-is-now-a-frozen-conflict-2014-12.

First and foremost, the occurrence of a possible war between the Arctic States poses many risks for the safety of the people living in the Arctic. With the use of modern and nuclear weapons many more people could get killed and severely injured, children and babies among them. Many areas would be affected by the war, destroying houses, hospitals and other important for the people infrastructures. A war in the Arctic would have major negative consequences on the Region's economy and social order, as people would lose their jobs and children would be left uneducated. After a war the Arctic could probably lose its strategic and economic importance that could impact its economic development.

The impact would not only be severe to the population of the Arctic but to its environment as well. Technological advancements have led in the development of modern warfare and nuclear weapons that can cause great devastation to the environment of the Arctic. The flora and fauna of the Arctic and especially its marine ecosystem, would be significantly destroyed, resulting to many animals being killed and severe sea waters pollution.

Furthermore, extensive ship movement, that could be a result of militarization, could really hurt the environment as well. The oil emissions of the ships in the sea can negatively impact the marine ecosystem of the Arctic Ocean and the big quantities of CO₂ emissions contribute in the climate change that the Arctic is already experiencing.

Therefore, it is crucial to find sustainable ways to achieve nuclear and complete disarmament in the Arctic. Thus, disarmament should always be connected to sustainable development so as to have the least negative environmental and social impact. States have to make sure that weapons and especially nuclear ones (as they pose greater threat) are destroyed and decommissioned in a way that they would not damage the environment. There are many examples in world history where ships or submarines were not decommissioned properly resulting to many deaths of the workers and environmental damage.



On August 10th 1985, in Chazma Bay naval yard outside Vladivostok, some parts of a Russian submarine were not removed properly, which resulted to huge amounts of radioactivity that led to ten deaths. According to a Russian government report, during the years 1965-1988, the Northern Fleet had dumped four reactor compartments with eight reactors (three of them containing damaged fuel) in the Abrosimov Gulf some meters way from water. Additionally, six other compartments had also been dumped into the water in the 1960s and 1970s. These disarmament projects had severe impact both on the people that were involved and the environment.

Hence, it is crucial to make sure that disarmament procedures are not taking place in expense of human lives or the destruction of the environment. In order for this to be achieved countries need to collaborate and set a new set of guidelines on the sustainable and safe disarmament of weapons and the decommission of submarines or vessels.

Major countries and organizations involved

Canada

Canada's contribution both in the Arctic Council and the Arctic Region as a whole, has been really important since 1996. Canada's main priorities regarding the socio-economic, environmental and cultural development in the Arctic Region, include youth development, developing partnerships and stronger bonds with indigenous people and collaboration between the indigenous people of the Arctic and the Arctic States. Canada has already accomplished many of their plans, some of them being: helping develop an action plan to prevent oil pollution in the Arctic Region and creating an Arctic Council Framework for reducing black carbon and methane emissions.



Finland

Finland has offered innovative and modern technology to many industries and aspects of the Arctic Region, like construction, environmental technology, transportation and navigation in ice-covered waters. It has also contributed with many research and educational programs and institutions. Some of Finland's main priorities are sustainable development in most aspects of the Arctic, by protecting the environment and exchanging information on best practices and technologies. Until now it has taken part in the establishment of the Arctic Biodiversity Congress, where scientists, government officials and students talked about biodiversity in the Arctic and the preservations of the Arctic's living resources.

Norway

Almost half of Norway's land mass is Arctic territory, which is home to almost 490,000 people. The northernmost university, the Arctic University of Norway is located in Norway, where 500 scientists from 20 institutions take part in researches in the field of natural sciences, technology and social sciences. Some of Norway's priorities include: fisheries and aquaculture, tourism, climate change and sustainable, social, economic and health development.

The Russian Federation

The Arctic population of Russia is nearly 2.5 million, while the indigenous groups who live in Russia, are 40. Its coastline accounts for 53% of the Arctic Ocean Coastline and has started expanding its political, economic and military influence in the Arctic. In the past years Russia's relationship with the other Arctic States has not been great as Russia was eager to start conflicts. Russia also had some conflicts with NATO, having provocative military activity in the periphery of the NATO territory. Russia is now the main State with such big military activity and intentions in the Arctic.



United States of America

The US became an Arctic State in 1867, by purchasing Alaska. Some of US's interests in the Arctic is national security, sustainable development, collaboration between the Arctic States and inclusion of the indigenous populations in decisions that affect them. Its priorities include climate change, ocean safety and the improvement of economic and living conditions in the Arctic. One of the USA's contribution in the Arctic Region was the launch of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), the first scientific assessment of the effects of climate change in the Arctic (2004).

China

China is one of the many non-Arctic States that have been attracted by the strategic and economical significance of the Arctic. Senior Chinese officials have created a clear strategy for their engagement in the Arctic. For instance, Beijing is interested in taking advantage of the sea routes that will open up as the ice melts. China also wants to have the ability to access the mineral resources and fishing waters of the Arctic. Lastly, it is building partnerships with many different partners in the region to guarantee that it will have a say on Arctic affairs in the future.

Organizations:

The Arctic Council

It is the primary intergovernmental forum in the Arctic Region and its goal is to promote collaboration, coordination and interaction between the Arctic States and the indigenous people, on issues of environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic Region. It cannot implement guidelines or recommendations, as only the Arctic States or international bodies can do so.



The Arctic Council has also created a forum so that the eight Arctic States can negotiate on three binding agreements.

1. Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (2011), whose goal is to strengthen aeronautical and maritime search and rescue cooperation and coordination in the Arctic.
2. Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (2013), whose goal is to strengthen collaboration and mutual assistance between the Arctic States on oil pollution preparedness and response in the Arctic.
3. Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation (2017), whose purpose is to enhance cooperation in Scientific Activities in the Arctic so as to develop scientific knowledge about the Arctic.

NATO

Arctic Region is of utmost importance to NATO Security. NATO is generally involved in the situations and military activity going on in the Arctic, as it has held several military exercises in the region. Furthermore, the involvement of NATO in the Arctic has minimized the possibilities of military confrontation between the States, to sustain the required balance and peace in the area and avoid eventual conflicts.

Timeline of events



<u>1931</u>	The Soviet Northern Fleet was founded.
<u>1939-1945</u>	The Battle of the Atlantic, the most important battle that ever happened in the Arctic (participants: UK, USA, Canada, Brazil, Norway, Germany, Italy).
<u>1942</u>	The Alaska- Siberian route (ALSIB), provided US-manufactured aircraft to the Soviet war effort, making use of the airspace within the Arctic Region.
<u>1956</u>	1st United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea at Geneva.
<u>1960</u>	2nd United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea at Geneva.
<u>1973</u>	3rd United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea in New York – The UNCLOS was created.
<u>1990</u>	The Soviet Union was dismantled from the Arctic Council.
<u>September 1996</u>	The Arctic Council was founded.
<u>May 28th2008</u>	The five coastal states of the Arctic Ocean (United States, Russia, Canada, Norway and Denmark)



	signed the Ilulissat Declaration.
<u>2007</u>	Russia started patrolling the Arctic.
<u>April 27th 2007</u>	Russia and Norway settled a 40-year dispute over the border of the Barents Sea.
<u>2011</u>	The Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic was signed.
<u>2013</u>	The Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic was signed.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

1st United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

On the 1st United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea at Geneva in 1956, four main and important conventions were discussed.

- The Convention on the Territorial and the Contiguous Zone

It was entered into force on 10 September 1964 and it sets some guidelines on the sovereignty of a coastal State, which extends to the air space over the territorial sea, its bed and subsoil.

- The Convention on the Continental Shelf



It was entered into force on 10 June 1964 and refers on the rights of the coastal States over the continental shelf, its exploration and the exploitation of its natural resources.

- The Convention on the High Seas and states that the

It was entered into force on 30 September 1962 and states that high seas have always be open to all nations and that no State can claim any part of them to its sovereignty. Thus, the countries have freedom of navigation, fishing, laying submarine cables and pipelines and flying over the high seas.

- The Convention on Fishing and Conservation of Living Resources of the High Seas

It was entered into force on 20 March 1966 and considers the conservation of the living resources of the high seas, the right of countries to engage in fishing on the high seas and the adoption of measures by the States to protect and conserve the living resources of the high seas.

These conventions were concluded in 1958 and signed by many countries.

3rd United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

This conference was held in 1973, New York, when the matter had already become an international subject of discussion. In this conference the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), was created, the main international law treaty on the area. Lasted for another nine years, until 1982, in which it was concluded.

Arctic Council

The Arctic Council being the leading intergovernmental forum of the Arctic, has taken many actions throughout the years in almost every issue concerning the Region. First and foremost is responsible for the effective cooperation and



communication between the Arctic States, so as to resolve their disputes and conflicts.

The actions of the Council are conducted in six working groups, whose responsibility is to carry out programs and projects ordered by the Arctic Council Ministers. One of them is the “Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)” which focuses on the human activity in the Arctic and its goal is to protect and develop economy, the environment and the living conditions of the indigenous people. The other Working Groups mostly work with the environmental aspect of the Arctic Region.

NATO

On October 7th 2017 NATO also released a report on “NATO and Security in the Arctic”. In this report four main topics are discussed. The Arctic and Euro-Atlantic Security, the Security impact of climate change on the Arctic, the Arctic and NATO-Russia relations and the increasing engagement of China in the Arctic.

Relevant UN Resolutions, Events, Treaties and Legislation

It is important to note that the participation and involvement of the United Nations in the topic of the Militarization of the Arctic Region is limited. Thus, there are rather little regarding the issue. However, more have been done concerning the well-being of the people living in the Arctic and the sustainable, economic and social development of the region. An important action of the UN is the Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), further elaborated below.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

The UNCLOS was created in the 3rd United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1973 and was concluded in 1982. It defines the rights and responsibilities of Member States regarding their use of the world’s oceans and sets guidelines for businesses, the environment and the use of natural resources. The convention has



been signed and approved by 164 countries and the European Union. Some countries (15), have signed the convention but not approved it and some others (17), have not signed it yet. The United States is the only Arctic State that hasn't signed nor approved the convention.

The UNCLOS is a vital part of the actions that have been taken to protect the Arctic, as it sets the main guidelines that the Arctic States have to follow when using the Arctic Ocean and generally the seas of the Arctic. It limits their actions within the Arctic Waters, concerning trade, the exploitation of natural resources and the use of submarines and pipelines.

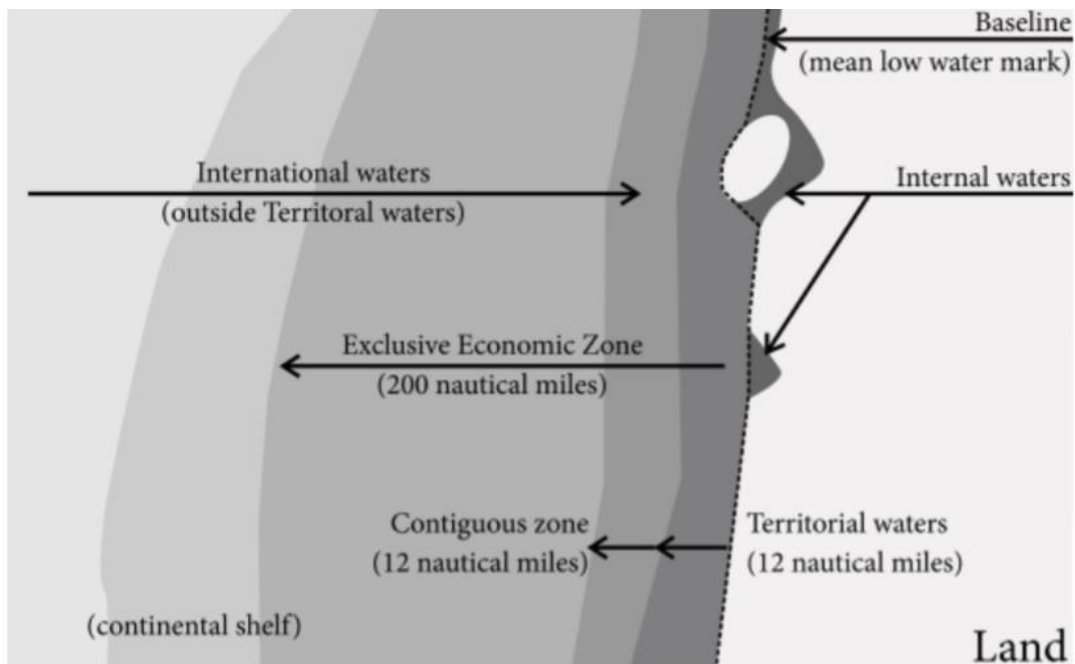


Image 4: UNCLOS sea zones.¹³

¹³Spohr , Alexandre Piffero, et al. "The Militarization of the Arctic: Political, Economic and Climate Challenges ." UFRGS Model United Nations Journal, <https://www.ufrgs.br/ufrgsmun/2013/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-Militarization-of-the-Arctic-Political-Economic-and-Climate-Changes.pdf>.

Sustainable development of Arctic human settlements (HSP/GC/21/5)¹⁴

This resolution was adopted on 20th April 2007 and addresses the challenges and problems faced by the Indigenous people of the Arctic, like climate change, the exploitation of natural resources and the possibility of conflicts between the Arctic States to occur.

General and complete disarmament (A/RES/44/116 L)¹⁵

This resolution was adopted on 15th December 1989 and addresses the resolving of the disputes between member states and providing them with better ways to solve their disagreements over territorial claims. It also calls for the prohibition of development and production of radiological weapons (complete disarmament).

The Ilulissat Declaration¹⁶

The Ilulissat Declaration was adopted on 28 May 2008 in Ilulissat, Greenland. It was announced by the five coastal States of the Arctic (United States, Russia, Canada, Norway and The Kingdom of Denmark), in the Arctic Ocean Conference that was held from the 27th to the 29th of May in Ilulissat, Greenland. In the conference many matters were discussed concerning the Arctic, like climate change and its effects, the lives of the indigenous people, the exploitation of natural resources, the protection of the Arctic ecosystem and the possible opening of new routes.

Non-Proliferation Treaty

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), was open for signature in 1968 and entered into force in 1970. As of now, 191 States have joined the Treaty, the five

¹⁴ Resolution HSP/GC/21/5, https://staging.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/5183_1_591232.pdf

¹⁵ Resolution A/RES/44/116 L, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/192759>

¹⁶ Ilulissat Declaration, <https://arcticportal.org/images/stories/pdf/Ilulissat-declaration.pdf>



nuclear-weapon States (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States) being among them. The significance of the Treaty is vast as it is the only arms limitation and disarmament agreement that was ratified by so many countries.

The NTP is an international treaty whose goal is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, to enhance collaboration between States regarding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to achieve complete disarmament.

The past years discussion has been going on in the Arctic for the creation of a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, which in order to be achieved, countries and States official should implement the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its principles. Only then complete disarmament of the Arctic could be achieved.

Possible solutions

Establishing cooperation between the 8 countries of the Arctic Council

The primary and most important step that should be taken is enhancing the cooperation between the Arctic States. Establishing collaboration, negotiation and peaceful communication could significantly help in the development of the Arctic. The main problem that exists is the conflicts and territorial disputes that arise among the Arctic States. Thus, by creating a peaceful relationship between the States, problems like that could be significantly minimized. This could be done by organizing more conferences and workshops where the countries would have the opportunity to propose ideas and peacefully disagree and discuss on possible agreements or guidelines that could be implemented.

Increase the involvement of the United Nations

As of now the involvement of the United Nations in resolving the conflicts between the Arctic and providing solutions for the problems in the Arctic, is little. Thus, the UN should take more effective actions and drastic measures, propose more



resolutions on the militarization and territorial claims in the Arctic and enhance the cooperation between the Arctic States.

Giving more authority to the Arctic States to implement and enforce guidelines and legislation

In order for conflicts and disputes in the Arctic to be minimized so as to focus on the real changes that need to be done, a clear legislation and a set of guidelines should be implemented. This legislation should indicate the rights and the responsibilities of the States, and what could happen in case they violate them (ex. sanctions). The Arctic Council has created a set of guidelines that the member States should reach an agreement to follow and the UN has proposed many solutions through its resolutions. However, the Arctic States tend not to follow them or abide by them.

An important reason this happens is the fact that the Arctic Council doesn't have the ability to implement or enforce its guidelines making the Arctic States the only parties responsible for following them. Thus, the role of the Arctic Council should probably be reconsidered and its member states should work together and further elaborate on a legal framework regulating their relationships which would be more attractive to comply with. They should probably, as all alliances, focus more on what connects them and their common interests rather than on what separates them and find a viable way to work out their differences.

Implementing a wide range of guidelines that the Arctic States should follow

Many guidelines have been implemented regarding the ecosystem of the Arctic, the protection of the marine life, the amelioration of the lives of the indigenous people, but little has been done regarding the territorial claims of the sea and land of the Arctic, the disarmament and generally the aspects concerning the militarization of the Arctic. Thus, a new set of guidelines should be created on the



territorial disputes and claims of the Arctic, the exploitation of the natural resources, taking advantage of the land and the ocean of the Arctic and the effects of these action on the indigenous populations and the ecosystem of the Arctic.

Informing officials of the countries about their rights and responsibilities within the Arctic Region

Reminding States officials about their rights and responsibilities within the Arctic Region is a crucial step in the development of the Arctic. Many States, like Russia or the United States, violate the guidelines that have been set by NATO or the Arctic Council, creating more conflicts in the Region. Thus, by making sure that the States understand their place in the region and the consequences that may come when they violate the certain legislation, could lead to a more peaceful environment in the Arctic, allowing other aspects of it to be developed.

Achieving demilitarization in the Arctic

Demilitarization is a key part of minimizing the conflicts and territorial disputes in the Arctic so as to prevent the occurrence of a possible war among the Arctic States. One of the main things that have been done in the past so as to achieve nuclear and complete demilitarization is the Non-Proliferation Treaty, along with the effort to create of a Nuclear Free Zone in the Arctic. Therefore, the world diplomacy could motivate the countries in question to choose a forum, which could be either the UN or the Arctic Council or both, and encourage them to start a new round of negotiations and discussions, within the framework described above, which is their circle of common interests. The ultimate goal could be either a set of guidelines or even better a new Treaty for the Demilitarization and Sustainable Disarmament of the Arctic region, which will be taking into consideration all aspects, economic growth, commerce, national resources exploitation, protection of the environment and will ensure a peaceful, fruitful and sustainable future, free of conflicts, territorial disputes and environmental damage.



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