

Background Guide Topic Three:
Militarization of the arctic region

Introduction

Global warming has taken a great toll on the Earth, effecting issues in the economy, as well as with the melting of polar ice caps, increased hurricanes, etc.¹ Global warming gradually melts the ice sheets causing a progressive opening of the Northwest Passage; which makes Arctic resources available for extraction. The militarization of the Arctic began during World War II, causing a major rise during the Cold War period, the Cold War “mentality” is taking effect with the current situation at hand. Similarly, the economies’ necessity for fuel corresponds with the race to claim the Arctic land. Included in the Arctic States are Russia, Canada, Greenland, Norway, and the United States, each seeking to attain supremacy in the region in order to provide for the increasing demand for new energy and mineral sources. Here are some numbers to emphasize the amount of resources in the Arctic: there is a little over ten percent of the world’s undiscovered oil and thirty percent of undiscovered gas under the Arctic seabed. To put all of those numbers into more perspective that is an approximated ten billion barrels of untapped oil. Various other metals are said to also be untouched in the Arctic, such as diamonds, gold, and other rare minerals.

With all of the free and open land, certain Arctic states have already “claimed” their land, which causes some dispute between the other states. Currently, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is the only effective international treaty which controls territorial claims in this particular region. Through this treaty a country gains the right to a two hundred mile zone, beyond its land borders, giving the rights to drilling and extraction. However, the treaty has only been signed by some of the Arctic States including, Russia, Canada, Norway and Denmark, the United States has not approved the treaty. The UN is now faced with the Russian tactical bombers flying over the area; the Canadians plan to build two military bases near the North Pole, and the rest of the Arctic states increasing the amount of patrols and expeditions to the region to reiterate and find more claims to their territory. The United Nations cannot undermine this issue, the military invasion of the Arctic needs to be addressed.

As part of DISEC, it is our responsibility to provide multiple options of various actions that can be taken to prevent conflict to occur between the countries involved. We must define the status of the

¹ 5 Deadliest Effects of Global Warming." *Popular | Environmental Graffiti*. Web. 29 Mar. 2010. <<http://www.environmentalgraffiti.com/sciencetech/5-deadliest-effects-of-global-warming/276>>.

Arctic and its surrounding waters, emphasizing if weapons and military should be allowed in the region.

History

Arctic Exploration

The 16th century marked the beginning of the exploration of the mystifying lands in the northern part of North America and Eurasia. Lasting for over four centuries, the land was initially taken over by Eskimos and those of the Mongolic origin. Explorers such as Christopher Columbus, Jacques Cartier, and many more performed the earliest voyages in order to find the newest trade routes to the Orient. However their expedition happened to be more complex than anticipated and very little was gained out of the entire excursion; curiosity of the new area vanished abruptly.

The 19th century brought about new, British explorers interested in the land that was forgotten about centuries back, John Ross, John Franklin, and a few others began their own journey into the Arctic territory. In 1845, Sir John Franklin led the Northern Passage, but sadly disappeared in his attempts to investigate the land; decades after, many searched in hopes of finding Franklin and his crew members. Between 1903- 1906 Ronald Amundsen gained power of the Northwest Passage, which separated Alaska and Russia. The Arctic became a primary focus again during the time of World War II and much after that for the transportation of materials and supplies. In 1947, the US began performing flights over the Arctic Ocean in order to create weather reports and oceanographic work in Beaufort Sea.

Presently, there are accurate maps of the Arctic region available due to the current technology available, and the exploration phase of the past has come to an end. There is now much emphasis on the effects of global warming in the region, and efforts that can be made to preserve the land and its value.²

Previous Principles & Territorial Claims

Exploration of the Arctic Region were performed by many of other countries than those surrounding the region, countries such as the United States, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Russia, and the United Kingdom entered the territory in order to place territorial claims on the vast unclaimed land. During the 20th century, sovereignty rights of the Arctic Region were an element of a legislative

² Delimitation, Polar Maritime. "The Law of the Sea and Polar ..." *Google Books*. Web. 5 Apr. 2010. <<http://books.google.com/books?id=RAOOIYTEzUEC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>>.

vacuum, yet many states in the Arctic border did not recognize it as an imperative matter. All of the countries involved in the doctrine have acknowledged its regulations and use it to base any claims of territory. The doctrine states the northern boundaries of the region as the northern coastlines of all the countries bordering the Arctic Ocean.

The rules have stated that in certain parts of the world, any claims of sovereignty would be accepted only if physical occupation comes along with it. The two theories acknowledging national sovereignty in the Arctic region are as follow,

- a) *res nullius*, where no nation could have sovereignty over the Arctic; and
- b) *res communes*, where every nation in the world shared an undivided sovereignty right in the region.³

During the 1920s, extensive sea sovereignty sea claims developed. Norway was the first state to make such claim, only after claiming possession of Svalbard Archipelago, in regards to the Spitsbergen Treaty. Because of this, the Soviet Union and Canada declared that their costal border should reach all the way to the North Pole, bringing forth the same disputes used by many states in the Antarctica situation. Canada's claims refer to the territory with longitudes of 60 degrees west and 141 degrees west, including all islands in between the northern tip of Canada to the North Pole. Shortly after, the Soviet Union made claims from the northern coasts of Europe and Asia (from Murmansk to the Chukchi Peninsula). Subsequently, the United States and Norway also made their own claims of the land; between the latter of 141 degrees west and 170 degrees west and 5 degrees east and 35 degrees east. Denmark made similar claims of land from 60 degrees west and 10 degrees west.

During the Cold War, the Arctic area was partitioned into the East-West division and the significance of the strategic benefit of the region increased, as it appeared to be the shortest path from the United States and the Soviet Union. The naval build up was the main advantage the soviets would gain by acquiring the Arctic region, however, other than through Alaska; the United States did not have any access to the Arctic waters, making them rely on other states to help build their defense. Canada also claimed rights over the islands not only in the Arctic Archipelago, but the Northwest Passage as well. The United States had approved of the former claim, however they discarded the latter, as their policy was to deem the Northwest Passage and the Arctic Ocean as international waters, thus declaring the

3 Engle, Eric. "Economic Theory of Law and the Public Domain." *Law Review Articles by Eric Engle*. Web. 3 Apr. 2010. <<http://lexnet.bravepages.com/media1.html>>.

unrestricted right of transportation for all vessels. Conversely, Canada believed that the waters of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago were Canadian territory, through the straight baselines theory. The dispute between the two countries carried on until 1988, when Manhattan (an American Tanker and the world's biggest commercial ship) voyaged through the Northwest Passage, alarming the Canadians. The Canadians were mainly upset because the ship had not asked for consent for the voyage to take place; the United States did this once more with the Polar Sea, causing the Canadians to be extremely upset. After the second incident, the two countries signed an agreement, "Arctic Cooperation" agreement where no vessels were to engage in research in the Canadian Arctic waters unless consent was given from the Canadian government.⁴

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

Currently, UNCLOS is the only aspect of global legislation regarding the rights and obligations states have in respect to world seas and oceans. There are five different zones, each containing an official regime.

The "territorial sea" is the first zone, including states bordering the sea or ocean (referencing article 3), stretching at approximately 12 nautical miles from the baselines of the shore. In this particular territory, the state can implement full jurisdiction, but the convention allows the right of innocent passage (article 17) for both governmental and non-governmental ships under certain restriction. Ships involving some sort of nuclear background are allowed in this area, but with proper documentation. The passage is defined (according to Article 19) as "navigation through the territorial sea for the purpose of:

- (a) any threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of the coastal State, or in any other manner in violation of the principles of international law embodied in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (b) any exercise or practice with weapons of any kind;
- (c) any act aimed at collecting information to the prejudice of the defense or security of the coastal State;
- (d) any act of propaganda aimed at affecting the defense or security of the coastal State;
- (e) the launching, landing or taking on board of any aircraft;
- (f) the launching, landing or taking on board of any military device;

⁴ "Arctic Military Bases Signal New Cold War - Times Online." *Times Online | News and Views from The Times and Sunday Times*. Web. 5 Apr. 2010. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article2238243.ece>.

- (g) the loading or unloading of any commodity, currency or person contrary to the customs, fiscal, immigration or sanitary laws and regulations of the coastal State
- (h) any act of willful and serious pollution contrary to this Convention;
- (i) any fishing activities
- (j) the carrying out of research or survey activities
- (k) any act aimed at interfering with any systems of communication or any other facilities or installations of the coastal State;
- (l) any other activity not having a direct bearing on passage.”⁵

The “contiguous zone”, contains a width of approximately 24 nautical miles from baselines. Inside this area, the state can implement control needed to “prevent infringement of its customs, fiscal, immigration or sanitary laws and regulations within its territory or territorial sea; punish infringement of the above laws and regulations committed within its territory or territorial sea.”

The “exclusive economic zone” can stretch up to 200 nautical miles from the baselines. It has rights in regard to natural resources; it is free to create the manner in which it will manage the resources, however other states must have consent in order to exploit these resources. The state is also allowed jurisdiction over artificial islands, installations, and structures relating to research.

The “continental shelf” is the seabed and submarine part, extending beyond the territorial sea to the edge of the continental margin. The states have the right to explore and exploit natural resources, including mineral and non-living resources.

The final area is known as the “high seas,” which are open to all states. The rights under the high seas in Article 87 include:

- (a) freedom of navigation;
- (b) freedom of overflight;
- (c) freedom to lay submarine cables and pipelines, subject to Part VI;
- (d) freedom to construct artificial islands and other installations permitted under international law, subject to Part VI;
- (e) freedom of fishing, subject to the conditions laid down in section 2;
- (f) freedom of scientific research, subject to Parts VI and XIII.⁶

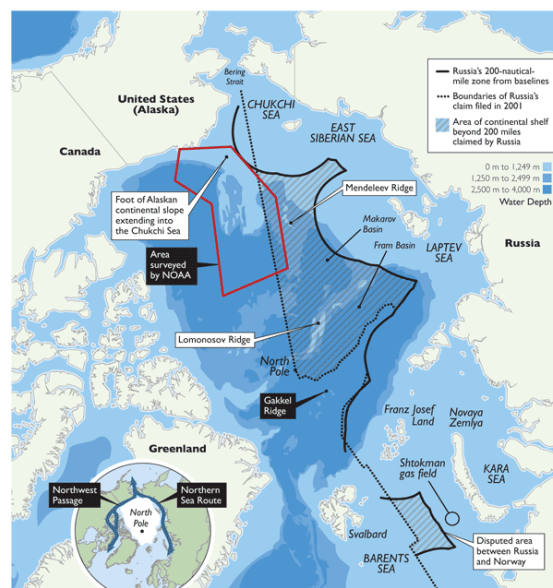
5 "United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Montego Bay 1982)." *Admiralty and Maritime Law Guide*. Web. 3 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.admiraltylawguide.com/conven/unclostable.html>>.

6 "United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Montego Bay 1982)." *Admiralty and Maritime Law Guide*. Web. 3 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.admiraltylawguide.com/conven/unclostable.html>>.

Current Situation

Militarization in the Arctic has occurred recently in the Russian Federation. In 2007 during an excursion on the Lomonosov Ridge, a Russian flag was placed on the seabed which allowed Moscow to patrol over the Arctic Ocean. American newspapers noted that Russian bombers infiltrated a twelve mile air defense around Alaska. The Russian army has expressed interest in increasing patrols throughout the Arctic Ocean, but official notice of the distribution of warships in 2008. Russian Navy officers have spoken about their new plans on handling any threats presented in the Arctic and are expanding the Northern Fleet's radius. In 2009, Vladimir Putin and the head of military and intelligence agencies promoted the likelihood of war (in the next decade) in the Arctic in regards to regions wealthy with their natural resources.⁷

U.S. and Russian Interests in the Arctic



Source: Joannetta J. Lee, "New Seafloor Maps May Bolster U.S. Arctic Claims," *National Geographic News*, February 12, 2008, at <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/0802/080212-af-arctic-claims.html> (June 16, 2008).

Map 1 • B 2421 | heritage.org

Members of NATO responded to the Russian Federation's actions by resupplying the Thule Air Base in Greenland, with approval of Denmark's government. The United States, along with Canada, have increased their research and strategies in fortifying the North American Aerospace Defense Command; along with the formation of an Arctic Region Command and Arctic Coast Guard Forum. Canada has also publicized the idea of building navy patrols for the Northwest Passage, a deep water port, and military bases.

⁷ Cohen, Ariel. "From Russian Competition to Natural Resources Access: Recasting U.S. Arctic Policy | The Heritage Foundation." *Conservative Policy Research and Analysis* | *The Heritage Foundation*. 15 June 2010. Web. 05 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2010/06/from-russian-competition-to-natural-resources-access-recasting-us-arctic-policy>>.

Main Countries Involved:United States

Former President George W. Bush delivered a presidential directive in regards to the United States' stance on the Arctic Policy. He placed emphasis on the importance of the preparing strategies regarding missile resistance and early warning systems in the Arctic region.⁸ In his directive, President Bush stated that, "The United States has broad and fundamental national security interests in the Arctic region and is prepared to operate either independently or in conjunction with other states to safeguard these interests." John Kerry also stated, "The Arctic should be recognized as a strategic priority for our nation... in order to guarantee secure borders, ensure access to natural resources, mediate shipping and transportation routes, and protect our marine resources, we must become full partners with the other Arctic nations and ratify the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea." The directive mentions that there is a race for control over certain areas of the Arctic. With the current administration in the United States, there is a split of support over the UNCLOS, while President Obama is in full support of the doctrine; Secretary of State Hillary Clinton disagrees with it. There have been intentions of endorsing the convention and emphasizing the importance of the role of the Arctic Council. The US does not want to allow the council rights to handle the security issues. Russia and the United States differ in the fact that the Russia does not support the freedom of navigation throughout the Arctic Ocean.⁹

Canada

Interest in the Arctic region has been at the top of the Canadian governments' priorities; Stephen Harper has emphasized the capitalist importance in regards to taking necessary action to take over the land. The United States is Canada's main partner in this mission to take control of the land. There are two reasons as to why Canada has conflicting views with its opposing powers is firstly, at the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in December 2013, Canada and Russia are going to present opposing conclusions to claims over the Arctic ocean floor. Secondly, because Canada is a second-rate power, it had has to create alliances with powerful countries in order to have a share in the resources and markets of the world. Conflicts have occurred with Canada and the United States, as the US does not agree with the Canadian control over the boundaries in the Beaufort Sea; Canada and

8 Omestad, Thomas. "Bush Signs Off on New U.S. Arctic Policy - US News and World Report." *Breaking National and World News - US News*. 12 Jan. 2009. Web. 10 Sept. 2010.

<<http://politics.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2009/01/12/bush-signs-off-on-new-us-arctic-policy.html>>.

9 Eilperin, Juliet, and Spencer Hsu. "White House Directive Guides Policy on Arctic - Washingtonpost.com." *Washingtonpost.com - Nation, World, Technology and Washington Area News and Headlines*. 19 Jan. 2009. Web. 10 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/18/AR2009011802085.html>>.

Denmark are having issues with the main ownership of Hans Island.¹⁰

Russian Federation

The area of the Arctic region is of great importance to the Russian Federation. As previously stated, there has been much effort put in by the government in order to take over the land. The land has much influence on the economic and strategic interests of Russia. The Arctic region allows entrance to three oceans; the military bases provide protection of the borders, which is beneficial to the Russian government. Currently, Russia and its neighboring country, Norway, are facing boundary issues in the Barents Sea; Russia and the United States are also facing similar issues with the Bering Sea. Russia does not support the internalization of the Arctic region. As stated by the Russian Security Council, within the next decade, there are no proposals to establish any military forces in the Arctic

Denmark

Denmark's policy of their documentation of the Arctic was published in 2008; Denmark has conflicting issues with the Lomonosov Ridge being part of Greenland; as well as issues with Canada over Hans Island. As Denmark is a member of the EU and NATO, it could serve as a mediator of the two groups.¹¹

Norway

As the only Scandinavian country involved with access to the Arctic Ocean, Norway is focusing much of their attention on the nautical transportation, the environment, and management of the Arctic region. Norway is concerned with the amount of Russian military presently in the region. UNCLOS is very important to Norway, as it deals with issues of navigation and environment. Norway would like to further the development of the Arctic region, but remain respectful of the Arctic Council's directives.¹²

Dividing the Arctic region fairly would be a difficult task due to the range of countries involved in the situation. There are many concerns as to the future of the region, especially with the actions currently taken the involved countries. It would be in the best interests of the region to regulate the amount of military action taking place. If a resolution could be established regarding the amount of militarization

10 Girard, Louis. "Canada's "Northern Strategy" and the Militarization of the Arctic." *World Socialist Web Site*. 10 Sept. 2010. Web. 10 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2010/sep2010/arct-s10.shtml>>.

11 "Danish Militarization of Arctic - BarentsObserver." *News - BarentsObserver*. 15 July 2009. Web. 10 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.barentsobserver.com/index.php?id=4614115>>.

12 "Militarization of the Arctic Continues - Climate & Energy - Heinrich Böll Stiftung." *Startseite - Heinrich Böll Stiftung*. 27 Oct. 2009. Web. 10 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.boell.de/ecology/climate/climate-energy-7710.html>>.

activity allowed in the Arctic, there could be a limit to the presence allowed in the area.

In regards to the Arctic Nations, it is important for the nations to work in junction to create a more advantageous rapport. Those involved with this situation are concerned with establishing rights to certain resources in order to establish security to promote safe shipping in the area. When shipping is included, other nations become involved beyond those surrounding the Arctic area. It will be important to taking into consideration any corruption of resources with all of the nations involved.

Directive

There have been reports of steady militarization in the Arctic region within the last couple of years. Circumpolar nations such as Denmark, Russia, Canada, and Norway have proclaimed a substantial expansion of their military capacities in the High North. Anders Rasmussen, NATO's Secretary General, declared his objective to increase alliance role in the region. The Arctic states would like to increase their sovereignty over the area because global warming will reveal new treasures. The melting ice will allow for more efficient trade routes, which will in return relieve blockage in other trade routes. The amount of resources that could form due to the melting of the ice could lead to a debacle between the circumpolar nations. According to the US Geological Survey, facts show that the Arctic region could hold up to twenty-five percent of the oil and gas reserve, leaving approximately ten billion barrels of oil untapped. Various precious metals, such as diamonds and gold lie untouched in the area as well. The main goal for most of these countries, is to settle all concerns and anxieties of the international bodies, even if it means using militarization to do so.

In the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Law of the Sea Treaty of 1982 is currently signed by 159 countries. It sets the territorial limit of states as twelve nautical miles, in which states have the right to extract resources as they see fit. This convention founded the International Seabed Authority and International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which enforces laws regarding mineral resource withdrawal, liberty of scientific study in areas beyond national authority, and protection of marine environment. UNCLOS has been the principal method of settling international disputes over exploitation rights and routes of high seas. UNCLOS entails the guidelines to which delegates must follow while forming ideas to handle the situation at hand.

GA 1: Disarmament and International Security

Topic Three

While researching this topic, delegates should focus on various steps that can be taken while working with national governments in order to systematize the outflow of the regions resources. Also forming ideas of various agreements that could be enforced in order to avoid military hostilities, as the situation in the Arctic continues to head down its current path. Delegates should ensure that any development in the Arctic and its surrounding area have the smallest negative effect on the environment as possible.

Like always, delegates should remember to approach these problems not as themselves, but as representatives of their respective nations.