

# Analysing Military And Security Issues In Arctic Region

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Abstract.....	2
2. Introduction.....	2
3. Historical Trajectory of Arctic's Geopolitical Landscape.....	2
4. International Cooperation and Governance.....	6
4.1. Arctic Council.....	6
4.2. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).....	6
4.3. Spitsbergen Treaty.....	7
5. Multi Layered Perspective of Arctic Security.....	7
5.1. Climate Change and Environmental Security.....	8
5.2. Territorial Sovereignty.....	8
5.3. Adoption of Regional and National Level Policies to Prevent Security Interests.....	9
5.3.1. Canada's Strategic Arctic Policy.....	9
5.3.2. USA's Strategic Focus on Russia and China.....	9
5.3.3. Iceland's Strategic Location between the Russia and USA.....	10
5.4. International Level Security Concerns.....	10
5.4.1. Suspension of Arctic Council.....	10
5.4.2. China: A new stakeholder in Arctic.....	10
6. Ice Navigation and Military Strategies in Arctic Region.....	11
6.1. Arctic Shipping Routes.....	12
6.2. Russia versus the NATO Strategic Race.....	12
6.3. Norway's Strategic position in Arctic Ice.....	13
7. Conservation v. Utilization of Resources.....	14
7.1. Geoeconomics Issue.....	14
7.2. Sustainable Economic Development.....	15
8. India's Diplomatic Engagement in Arctic Region.....	15
8.1. Geopolitical Significance of India's Arctic Strategy.....	15
8.2. India's Role in Arctic Governance.....	16
9. Recommendations.....	16
10. Conclusion.....	18
11. References.....	18

## **1. Abstract**

This research paper will navigate through the multidisciplinary facets of growing geopolitical interests in the Arctic region which raises the integrated military and security concerns. The paper will also delve into the vulnerability of the Arctic to unprecedented climate changes and the subsequent opportunities it offers to the nations in crafting their sustainable security solutions opting for cooperation, diplomacy, and innovative strategies to promote peace, stability, and environmental resilience in this dynamic region.

## **2. Introduction**

The Arctic region is located above 66° 34' north latitude, known for its frozen expanse and home to about millions of inhabitants. The region which was earlier perceived for its geographical space has now transformed into a competitive political arena. The region's unlocked opportunities have not only provided access to untapped resources but also intensified geopolitical competition.

## **3. Historical Trajectory of Arctic's Geopolitical Landscape**

An enigmatic stretch of ice and water termed as Arctic, has captivated the interest of scientists, researchers, explorers and policy makers. The once inhospitable land has a complex and evolving geopolitical landscape which have raised the present-day sovereignty and security issues at the global stage. Before pre-European exploration to the Arctic region, there was growing interest amongst hunters in muskoxen, seals, caribou and waterfowl. Many such marine hunters known as Paleo-Eskimos sailed through Bering Strait, Siberia, and subsequently in an unoccupied tundra regions of Canada, Greenland and Alaska. Twelfth century witnessed a phased migration of Thules, traversing across Arctic Canada from Alaska to Greenland during the times of open sea waters, resulting in their occupation of Lancaster Sound and Baffin Bay region.

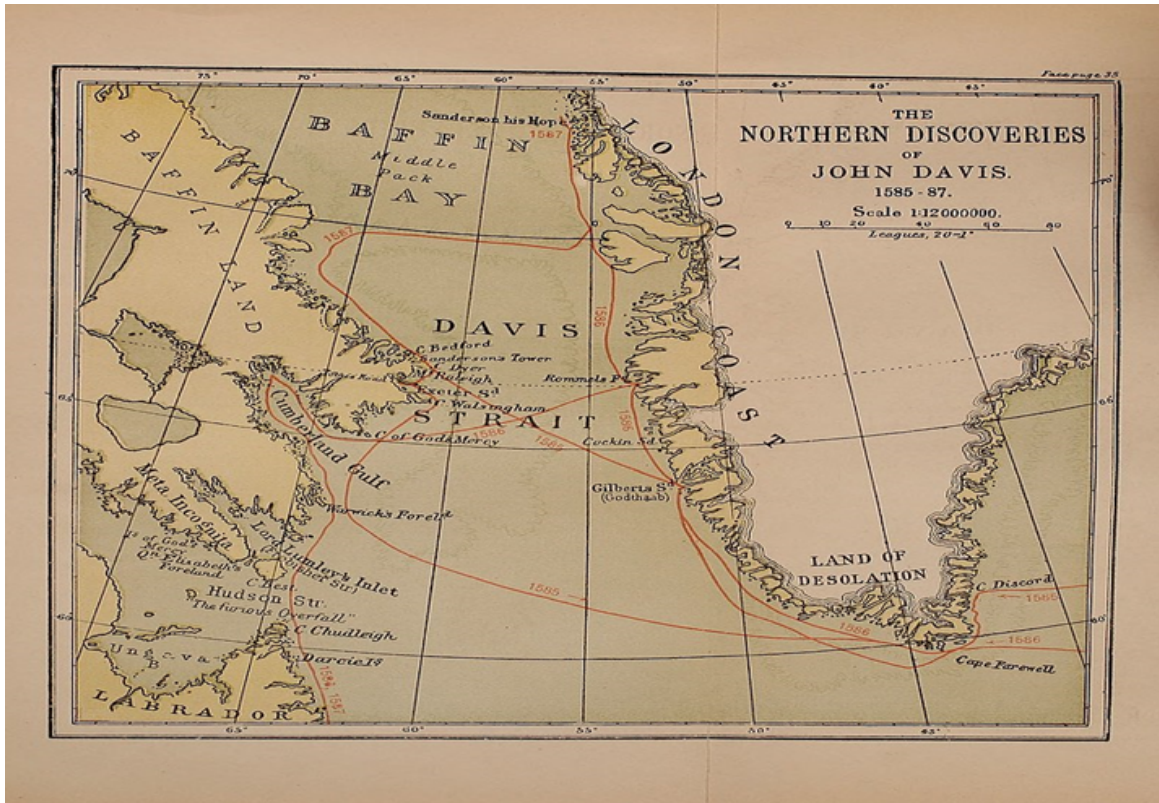


*Source*<sup>1</sup>: people of the Thule culture migrated from Alaska into the Canadian Arctic and Greenland.

Europeans were motivated to explore the Arctic region with the hope of establishing sea routes to East Asia through the Arctic islands of North America. England's search for northwest passage began by Martin Frobisher in 1576, with the aim to establish an English colony and gold mine in the Canadian Arctic. Subsequently, in 1587 John Davis traversed between Greenland and Baffin Island which was later termed as the Davis Strait.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Archaeology in the Arctic \(uwaterloo.ca\)](http://Archaeology.in.the.Arctic(uwaterloo.ca).).



Source<sup>2</sup>: *Exploration of John Davis (1585-1587)*

European exploration started in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, when there was a dominance of Portugal and Spain on the sea routes to Asia. The Dutch merchants wanted to navigate to East Asia through the sea routes of Cape of Good Hope and the Indian Ocean which was not only under the control of Portugal but also a long and time-consuming route. Russia's exploration to the Arctic region began with the conquest of Siberia in the 16th century. In March 1583, the Tsar ordered the establishment of a city near the Mikhailo-Archangel monastery, situated at the mouth of the Northern Dvina River, 30 kilometers from the White Sea, which was known as Arkhangelsk in the 17th century. This seaport played a key role in development of Arctic Shipping routes for Russia. Tsar Peter I instructed Vitus Jonassen Bering to find a point where Siberia connected to America in order to determine whether

<sup>2</sup> [A life of John Davis, the navigator, 1550-1605, discoverer of Davis straits : Markham, Clements R. \(Clements Robert\), Sir, 1830-1916 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive.](#)

Asia and North America is separated by water. As a result the Second Kamchatka Expedition led to the discovery of Alaska and the Strait separating Siberia and Alaska was termed as the Bering Strait.

The 19th century witnessed a dramatic transformation towards the ideas of imperialism and colonialism where the race was towards territorial claims and resource exploitation. In this particular era Arctic played a role of circumnavigation for powerful nations to implore shortest sea routes in order to navigate their imperialist ideology. The race to uncover the Arctic region led to many catastrophic explorations, one such was by a British explorer Sir John Franklin in the year 1845. The open sea water hypothesis in 19th century Arctic geopolitics witnessed the international collaboration between the USA, Russia and Britain in rescue missions, reflecting their shared interest in Arctic exploration.

The geopolitical dynamics of the Arctic in the 20th century have witnessed a strategic military performance to assert sovereignty and national security in the open seas. During the Cold War, Norway covertly constructed a naval facility known as Olavssvern, ingeniously carved into the mountainside just beyond the city of Tromsø, situated within the Arctic Circle, in order to fight against the Soviet Union. During World War II, the US congress passed a Lend Lease Programme to provide military and economic support to the USSR against the Nazi Germany. This led to collaborative efforts between the USSR, UK and USA in the development of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) to be used for freight logistics in the Arctic during the outbreak of the war. Even during the outbreak of the Cold war, the Soviet Navy's Northern Fleet had its main bases on the Kola Peninsula which was within the Arctic Circle. One of the most ambitious projects of USA and Canada collaboration was the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, which was built to monitor the Arctic space against the Soviet bomber and InterContinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) attack. Furthermore, the Arctic also assumed paramount significance in the realm of security, particularly for NATO. This heightened importance was primarily attributed to the strategic value of the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom Gap in order to obstruct Soviet submarines from gaining access to the Atlantic Ocean.

The geopolitical landscape of the 21st century Arctic is different unlike the Cold war era, where the world was divided between the two greatest powers i.e., the USA and Russia. The shift from the rivalry

to collaboration can be traced from the 1987 Mikhail Gorbachev's Murmansk speech, which stressed upon developing Arctic as a zone of peace, scientific exploration programmes with other countries such as Canada and promoting confidence building measures such as limiting the rivalry in anti-submarine weapons<sup>3</sup>.

#### **4. International Cooperation and Governance**

The Arctic States within the Arctic Circle are Russia, the USA (through Alaska), Canada, Denmark (through Greenland), Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. These States are further classified into Arctic Five and Arctic Eight on the basis of States bordering the Arctic Circle and Arctic Ocean.

##### **4.1. Arctic Council**

The rapid pace of melting of ice and opening of new maritime routes had drawn the attention of the eight Arctic nations as well as non-state actors to transform their international policies from confrontation to collaboration. Subsequently, the eight Arctic Nations signed the Ottawa Declaration and became the members of the Arctic Council which was formed in the year 1996 with the vision of promoting peace and cooperation. Furthermore, one of the core responsibilities of the "Observer States" is to Recognize Arctic State's sovereignty and jurisdiction over the Arctic.

##### **4.2. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**

The climatic change in the Arctic region has resulted in receding natural icebreakers and increasing security and territorial ascent amongst the ocean waters. In order to promote equitable use and conservation of the seas, led to an agreement which was signed by several States except USA in the year 1982 and implemented in the year 1994, known as the UNCLOS. The said norms have resulted into international cooperation amongst the Arctic States which were erstwhile in disagreements and conflicts. Article 3 of UNCLOS provides that every state may claim a territorial sea that extends up to 12 nautical miles<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the contiguous zone may not extend beyond 24 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured<sup>5</sup>. Beyond this contiguous zone, there lies a 200-nautical-mile-wide Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), where coastal states hold the

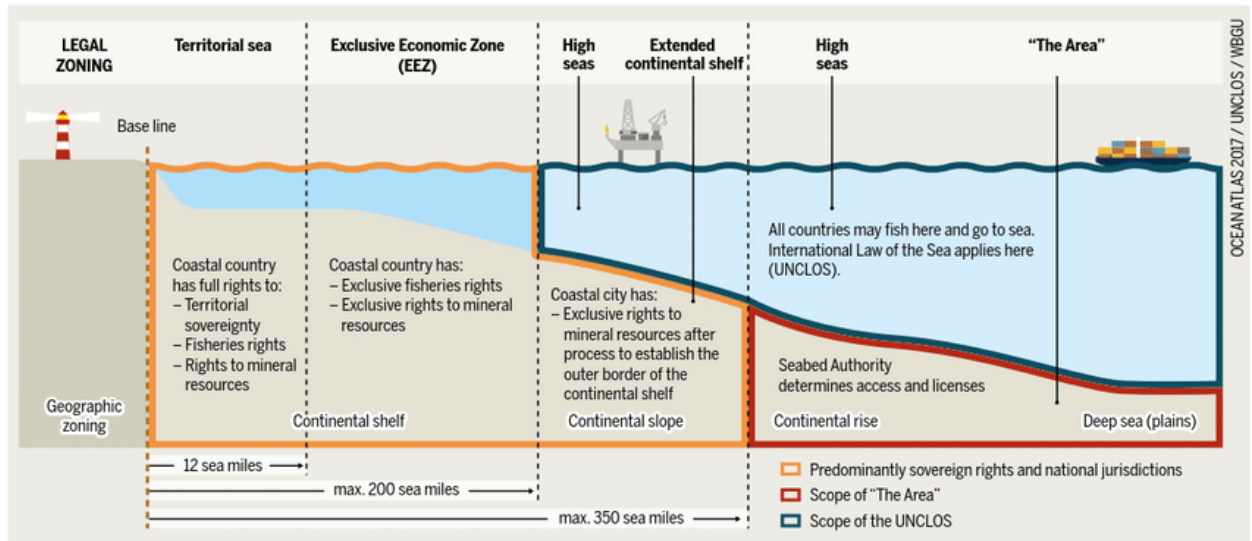
---

<sup>3</sup> [Microsoft Word - MIKHAIL GORBACHEV speech.doc \(barentsinfo.fi\)](#).

<sup>4</sup> [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](#).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, Article 33.

authority to exploit the resources found in both the water column and the continental shelf<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, apart from the EEZ, The States can also exploit resources in their continental shelves up to a distance of 350 nm from the baselines<sup>7</sup>. The High Seas is under the jurisdiction of Internal Law and even open to all States<sup>8</sup>.



*Source: Maritime zones according to UNCLOS (Bähr, 2017)*

### 4.3. Spitsbergen Treaty

Spitsbergen, which was earlier a no man's land suddenly gained importance in the 19th century because of its mining opportunities. Though the Spitsbergen Treaty came into force in the year 1925 and was included into Norwegian Law as "Svalbard law", with conditions to keep the territory demilitarized and provide free access to all the signatories.

## 5. Multi Layered Perspective of Arctic Security

Arctic Security is a multifaceted issue which involves various governance dimensions with respect to regional, national and international level.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, Article 58.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Article 76(6).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, Article 87.

### **5.1. Climate Change and Environmental Security**

The accelerated climate change and increase in the earth's temperature has led to weathering of ice sheets. The natural methane emissions into the Arctic arising from the terrestrial and offshore sources, a potent greenhouse gas, is the major cause for global warming.

The warmer Arctic will lead to an increase in geoeconomics and political competition thus raising the national security issues amongst the Arctic States. States like Russia and China, will find new profound commercial opportunities which may lead to direct confrontation with the stable Arctic States. The continuous intervention will lead to development of more aggressive policies with an agenda to demilitarize any assertions over the sovereignty which would ultimately risk escalation of conflicts.

### **5.2. Territorial Sovereignty**

Territorial issues in the Arctic revolve around the delimitation of continental shelves and the allocation of seabed resources. Thus Article 235 of UNCLOS does not explicitly define the Arctic region and uses the expression "ice-covered areas" which leads to wide and ambiguous interpretation by the States to delimit the continental shelf in their favor, raising issues of sovereignty and national security.

Furthermore, Article 76 outlines the method to measure one's continental shelf but it fails to cover the overlapping claims of the Arctic States to territorial waters, exclusive economic zones (EEZs), and continental shelves.

The common delimitation method is the median line principle, according to which any point that is closer to one coastal state is considered to fall within the jurisdiction and control of that particular state. In 2012, Canada and Denmark jointly declared their preliminary agreement to settle the boundary in the Lincoln Sea, extending it to 200 nautical miles from their respective coastlines.

The issue regarding delimitation of Denmark's and Norway's fishing zones and continental shelf areas in the waters between the east coast of Greenland and the Norwegian island of Jan Mayen, was raised before the ICJ, who in its judgment did not refuse to apply the median line principle but laid down a the factors that may affect the position of the boundary line, i.e., access to resources, essentially fishery



resources (capelin), particularly with regard to the presence of ice ; population and economy ; questions of security ; conduct of the Parties<sup>9</sup>.

If Russia and other Arctic states had used sector theory for delimitation agreements based on meridians, they could have prevented the formation of an international seabed area within Russia's Arctic sector as this sector theory allows dividing the Arctic continental shelf into five sectors among the Arctic states, giving them control over their respective areas.

### **5.3. Adoption of Regional and National Level Policies to Prevent Security Interests**

#### **5.3.1. Canada's Strategic Arctic Policy**

Historically, there have been instances where actions taken by the Government of Canada to strengthen military security in the Arctic, such as the forced relocation of Inuit communities to establish Canadian Arctic sovereignty during the Cold War, have had detrimental effects on Indigenous communities in the region. Subsequently, in September, 2019, Canada launched its Arctic and Northern Policy Framework partnering with the Indigenous representatives, with a vision of "Nothing about us, without us". It is pertinent to note that unlike Russia, Canada on one hand allows free transit from NWP showcasing its inability to monitor the transit and on the other hand claims sovereignty over the said route.

#### **5.3.2. USA's Strategic Focus on Russia and China**

One of the four pillars of USA's 2022 Arctic policy is to protect its sovereign territory as well as the security of its treaty allies in the Arctic region. The policy clearly limits any future possibility of cooperation with Russia in the Arctic governance because of Russia's aggressive measures towards Ukraine. Even in its 2019 Arctic Policy, the USA refused to accept China's status of being a "Near Arctic State,"<sup>10</sup>.

---

<sup>9</sup> International Court of Justice. 'Maritime Delimitation in the Area between Greenland and Jan Mayen (Denmark v. Norway)'. <https://icj-cij.org/case/78>.

<sup>10</sup> [2019-DOD-Arctic-Strategy \(defense.gov\)](https://www.defense.gov/2019-DOD-Arctic-Strategy).

### **5.3.3. Iceland's Strategic Location between the Russia and USA**

Iceland having no army bases, seeking collaboration with NATO and investing in its Coast Guard security against the continuous Russian Intervention in the High North. The US is strategically offering support to Iceland by enhancing the so-called GIUK (Greenland-Iceland-UK) gap and developing a network of US and Icelandic assets in order to monitor the increased Russian aerial and submarine activity as well as the state of undersea fiber cables.

### **5.4. International Level Security Concerns**

Non-Arctic States such as China, France, Japan, South Korea, United Kingdom and India have shown a keen interest in the Circumpolar North. As the Arctic is becoming more accessible due to the climatic catastrophe, Non-Arctic States have found an opportunity to conduct research exploration and engage in trading up towards the North. This increased interest pressurizes the Arctic States to develop an international polar policy in order to protect their national as well as international interests.

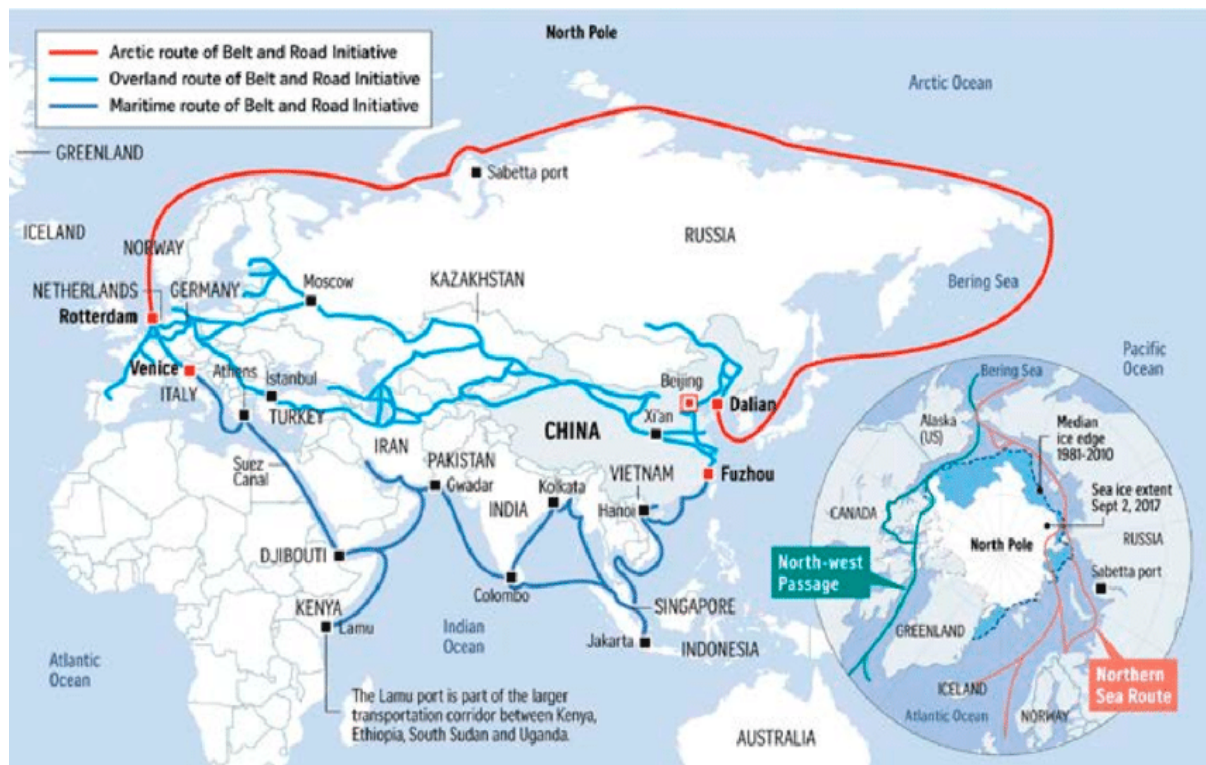
#### **5.4.1. Suspension of Arctic Council**

The other aspect of the growing security concerns in the Arctic region is the suspension of the Arctic Council due to Russia's unprecedented invasion in Ukraine, this led to lack of engagement between the West and Russia, thus paving way for China to implore its expansionism in the Arctic. Furthermore, the application by Finland and Sweden for NATO membership can also result in exclusion of Russia from the strategic Western Arctic diplomacy thus prompting Russia to undertake aggressive Arctic security policy.

#### **5.4.2. China: A new stakeholder in Arctic**

China's formal inclusion of the Arctic within its strategic framework for maritime cooperation, as part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), signifies a significant development in its global maritime ambitions. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) National Development and Reform Commission and the State Oceanic Administration articulated a concept known as the "blue economic passage", that seeks to establish a robust maritime route connecting China to Europe via the Arctic Ocean, highlighting China's expanding interest and presence in the Arctic region. Despite China's official

pursuit of the “Ice Silk Route”, there can be seen an increased interest in Greenland’s mineral resources and Rare Earth Element Sector.



*Source: [Vivekananda International Foundation \(vifindia.org\)](http://vifindia.org)*

Despite China's efforts to establish a diplomatic position in Arctic affairs, the world is quite apprehensive of its discrete debt-trap diplomacy, through which it tends to gain influence over the nations.

## 6. Ice Navigation and Military Strategies in Arctic Region

The Northwest Passage, which was developed in the 1800s by the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker *Northwind* and the U.S. Navy's *Burton Island* by navigating via the McClure Strait. They later rendezvoused with Canada's icebreaker *Labrador*, which continued westward through the Panama Canal, ultimately becoming the first ship to circumnavigate North America. Currently, Russia has more than 40 active icebreakers including 10 nuclear-powered variants, followed by the USA and China's energy security policy. The 21st Century is believed to be an era where international conflict over the Arctic region may arise due to the military expansion and climate change.

The Circumpolar Arctic Five, i.e Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the USA are the key stakeholders with their strategic military activities and deployments trying to create dominance over the Arctic region especially the trading routes.

### **6.1. Arctic Shipping Routes**

The Northern Sea Route (NSR), predominantly under the control of Russia, is the shortest trading route as compared to the traditional route via Suez Canal. Though Russia's claim over the NSR is disputed, for instance, unlike other countries Canada recognises Russia's claim over NSR as Russia recognises Canada's claim over NWP. Russia does not want to lose such a strategic trading route to the NATO alliance, due to this there has been extensive military developments by Russia in the name of protection of its national security but discreetly wants the control of the Arctic region to regulate the "Access denial" to the Arctic in its favor.

Canada utilizes the Northwest Passage (NWP) as a vital sea route to reach its Northern settlements and industrial sites in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, as an alternative to the longer journey through the Panama Canal and shortening the shipping routes between Asia and Europe by approximately 2,500 miles, which further reduces the East Coast to West Coast North American trip by over four thousand miles. The then Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper had presented Canada's stance over Arctic Sovereignty as "Use it or lose it."

### **6.2. Russia versus the NATO Strategic Race**

Russia has always been an aggressive player, whenever the question of military operation arises, whether it's the total trading control over the Northern Sea Route till 1991 or the Ukraine's invasion. The stance of Russia has always been a mix of cooperative and competitive strategies, however, when it comes to the issue of sovereignty over the Arctic origin, Russia has always been competitive. Classic case of Russia's planting of its titanium flag on the underwater Lomonosov ridge, claiming it to be its extended continental shelf<sup>11</sup>.

The military strategies of Russia derives its bases from the Basic Principles of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic to 2035. The Basic Principles 2035 outline the threat of national security and

---

<sup>11</sup> PIB Delhi. (2022, March 17). Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh releases India's Arctic Policy in New Delhi today. Ministry of Earth Sciences.

obstruction in economic activities of the Russian Federation by “some States”. Russia is extensively trying to remilitarise the Arctic, with its Northern Fleet headquartered at Severomorsk, at the top of the Kola Peninsula near Murmansk, with additional home ports at Kola, Motovskiy, Gremikha, and Ura Guba.

Russia’s Northern Fleet engaged up to 1,800 people, about 80 units of combat and special equipment, 10 aircraft and 15 ships in 2023. Furthermore, the Bastion-P and Pantsir-S1 coastal defense systems on Kotelnny Island form a robust coastal defense setup for Russia. They enhance Russia’s ability to protect its territory and restrict access to NATO or U.S. forces by air, sea, or land.

Russia’s Arctic policy brings up four issues of military security:

- (i) The protection of the ballistic-missile submarine fleet;
- (ii) Protection of trade routes along the Arctic and from the Arctic to other parts of the world;
- (iii) Defense of coasts, ports, and shipping; and the movement of warships between the Atlantic and Pacific.

The increasing militarisation of Russia has been a wake up call for NATO Alliance, to strategize their Arctic Policy as a collaborative and cooperative effort. Subsequently, the USA has decided to elevate its U.S. Army Alaska Command to the status of a division, specifically the 11th Airborne Division. This significant move is accompanied by a historic visit by the NATO Secretary General to the Canadian Arctic, marking the first of its kind. Furthermore, NATO conducted its largest Cold Response 2022 training held by Norway biannually.

### **6.3. Norway’s Strategic position in Arctic Ice**

North Norway accounts for 35% of Norway’s mainland territory, and 9 % of Norway’s population lives north of the Arctic Circle. Norway plays a strategic role in militarisation of the Arctic region because of its strategic position both as the founding member of NATO as well as being the member of the European Economic Area, as the Member State of the EU, and in terms of territorial location of being the closest to Russia raising the national security concerns. Norway has strategically used its inferior position to Russia’s military exposure, in its favor through collaborative and cooperative methods such as the cooperation over delimitation of the Barents Sea. However, with the invasion of

Crimea and Ukraine by Russia, the relations between Russia and Ukraine have somehow strained. In furtherance to this now, Norway is seeking collaborative support from NATO and its EU counterpart to tackle its national security issues in the Arctic. However, Russia sees Norway's alliance with the USA as an anti-Russian hysteria. Norway is extensively investing in military infrastructure and Bakke-Jensen has described Russia as "a demanding neighbor", due to which Norway is engaging with the Nordic countries like Sweden and Finland and Baltic NATO members in regional training exercises. Lastly, Norway being the strategically small country as compared to Russia's defence is celebrating its biggest victory by taking over the chairmanship of the Arctic Council from Russia and organizing its 14th Arctic Council meeting in 2025.

Russia has always been aggressive towards the States who intend to have a NATO membership, whether it's Ukraine or Georgia and even threaten the States with serious military and political consequences against the membership of Finland and Sweden to NATO. Though after the Ukraine invasion, NATO and EU have imposed sanctions on the Russian energy sector, which might have prevented Russia's energy projects in the Arctic. However, despite the said sanctions Russia's deterrence has not wavered.

## **7. Conservation v. Utilization of Resources**

The Earth's last frontier is seen as the destination of an economic hotspot raising the issue of a balance between the conservation and utilization of resources in such a competitive geoeconomics conundrum.

### **7.1. Geoeconomics Issue**

Approximately 84% of Arctic resources are located on the edge of the continental shelf, with about 22% of untapped concentration of oil and gas reserves, with Russia claiming almost 80% of this valuable energy wealth. Over 70% of undiscovered oil resources are concentrated in five regions, including Arctic Alaska and East Greenland Rift Basins, while a similar proportion of undiscovered natural gas resources is found in the West Siberian Basin and other areas. About 84% of these resources are offshore. In total, the Arctic holds around 90 billion barrels of oil, 1,669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids<sup>12</sup>.

---

<sup>12</sup> [USGS Fact Sheet 2008-3049](#).

China's investment over Russia's energy facility in the Arctic through the Yamal LNG project, opens new opportunities for the communist country to strategize its Arctic presence in BRI and simultaneously shift its domestic reliance from coal towards energy generation sources. Furthermore, Greenland, whose economy mainly relies on the fishing industry, has a vast potential of rich deposits of iron, zinc, and rare earths. This provided an opportunity to China to have access to the North America market via investments in the iron ore Isua Project.

The melting of the Arctic ice has raised the concern over sustainable fishing. With the rise in water level, the Barents Sea has become the home for various marine mammals. In order to manage the fishing area, North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) has been signed by many contracting parties including Russia and excluding the USA that stretches from the southern tip of Greenland, east to the Barents Sea, and south to Portugal. Furthermore, the United States led Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean was signed in Greenland on October 3, 2018, with the principle objectives of prevention of unregulated fishing in the high seas portion of the central Arctic Ocean and the facilitation of joint scientific research and monitoring.

## **7.2. Sustainable Economic Development**

Sustainable economic development in a military and security region where there is a race for economical survival seems to be a far reaching idea. Nevertheless, the said agenda can be achieved if it is included under the Sustainable development Goals dealt in the various UN Conventions. Apart from this various instruments have been adopted such as IMO's The Polar Code (2014) as well as the Agreement on Enhancing International Science Cooperation in the Arctic.

## **8. India's Diplomatic Engagement in Arctic Region**

### **8.1. Geopolitical Significance of India's Arctic Strategy**

In the race of economic development, India is not lagging behind, instead it is chasing its counterparts with more rigor and strategic policy. Its involvement in the race to reach the Arctic can be traced when the British Government of India signed the Svalbard Treaty of 1920. India has taken the initiative to develop its research station on Svalbard, particularly known as Himadri. Furthermore, the other

achievement for India was to obtain an observer status in the Arctic Council, during the Kiruna Ministerial Meeting in the year 2013.

## **8.2. India's Role in Arctic Governance**

Till now, India's Arctic aim was very much limited to research in glaciological or biological studies. However, after the geopolitical shift towards the extraction and utilization of untapped Arctic resources, India has transformed its international involvement towards the race to chase, with its extensive diplomatic cooperative and collaborative projects with the Arctic Nations as well as a well strategic implementation of Arctic Policy, with core emphasis to develop its space technology to fill in the gaps of low digital connectivity in the Arctic.

New Delhi's involvement in the Arctic is driven by its aim to secure Russia's commitment to the expansion of the North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). Once completed, this corridor will serve an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). India's continuous involvement in the Russian Arctic can be seen through its cooperation with Russia in various projects such as investment in the Vankor field in Siberia in the year 2015 for production of hydrocarbons. India and Russia have agreed to train Indian seafarers in polar and Arctic waters, while also considering the usage of transportation routes like the Northern Sea Route and Eastern Maritime Corridor.

Furthermore, India's Arctic policy's marginal note highlights the aim behind India's partnership.e., to promote sustainable development, by laying down six pillars; strengthening scientific research, climate and environmental protection, economic and human development, enhancing transportation and connectivity, promoting governance and international cooperation, and building national capacity in the Arctic region.

Lastly, India's G20 presidency has also proven to be a beacon in the dark, guiding all the eyes towards its brilliance in representing Global South through the theme of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam or 'One Earth-One Family-One Future', thus showcasing its potential to initiate a multilateral cooperation on a sustainable Arctic governance.



## 9. Recommendations

### a. Non- Military multilateral Cooperation and Collaboration

Most of the multilateral cooperation initiatives are limited to a few States. For instance the Nordic-Baltic Cooperation's global partnership with the USA or the Barents Euro Arctic Council's collaboration with Russia. To counter growing militarization it is important to promote collective collaboration amongst all the Arctic States including Russia, at sub-regional level along with an exchange of dialogues with the other members of the Arctic Council, for instance India, in order to share collective interest and together promote national integrity and sovereignty of the States.

### b. Bridging the divides and promoting global synergy

It is pertinent to note that Russia has 24,150 kilometers of coastline which makes it a strategic location for the majority of resource tapping. Arctic as well as Non-Arctic nation's must undertake global collaborative efforts in terms of harnessing untapped resources and exploration of maritime routes in a sustainable and equitable manner; regardless of their geopolitical divergences in order to promote global unity.

### c. Balancing of Conservation and Utilisation of Resources

One of the drawbacks in the governance mechanism of the Arctic Council is that it does not explicitly prohibit the exploitation of Arctic resources, rather promotes its exploration and utilization in a sustainable manner. For instance within the exclusive economic zones, States have sovereign rights to exploit the natural resources found on its sea bed, sub-soil and waters above it. In order to minimise the inevitable, nations should promote the use of technological innovation in order to increase ecological security.

### d. India's Collaboration with Arctic Nations

Though India's collaboration with Russia opens its access to NSR, India cannot ignore the growing efforts of China to maintain its cooperative projects with Russia. It is recommended that India needs to look for opportunities to access the NWP, which can be achieved by diversifying diplomatic engagements with the Scandinavian Countries, especially in terms of

investment in infrastructure and technological development by leveraging its own technological potential. For instance, Norway, who has taken over chairship from Russia over the Arctic Council, plays a key strategic role for India's growing interest in maritime transport and renewable energy resources.

e. India needs to look for Investment Opportunities

Interestingly, one of the members of the ASEAN block i.e Singapore, has also been granted an observer status in the Arctic Council. This can help India to initiate a diplomatic engagement with the ASEAN member States offering capacity building in understanding Arctic governance, scientific research and maritime security issues concerning both ASEAN and India. In turn India can optimize the Private Public Partnership investment opportunities in developing Arctic infrastructure and technological advancement. This collaboration can also be pivotal to counter the growing Chinese dominance.

## **10. Conclusion**

The Arctic has been transitioned in a political arena where both Arctic and Non-Arctic nations are trying to assert their interests, in their pursuit to be secured in terms of; political stability, resource procurement, ecological security and most importantly promotion of national security. Most nations have come to a realization that their said interests will only be achieved with due cooperation and collaborative efforts. Furthermore, there is a need for a balanced approach, combining the national and the environmental interests through robust diplomacy, responsible resource management, and inclusive governance cooperative efforts, to address the emerging military and security issues in the Arctic world.

## **11. References**

1. Alexander, L. M. Canada-Denmark (Greenland) Report, Number 1-1 (p. 371). In Charney, J. I., & Alexander, L. M.
2. Andersson, P., Zeuthen, J. W., & Kalvig, P. (2018). 'Chinese Mining in Greenland: Arctic Access or Access to Minerals?'. Arctic Yearbook, 2018.

3. Antrim, C. L. (2010). THE NEXT GEOGRAPHICAL PIVOT: 'The Russian Arctic in the Twenty-First Century'. *Naval War College Review*, 63(3), 14–38.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/26397122>.
4. Blanchet, M.-A., Primicerio, R., Frainer, A., Kortsch, S., Skern-Mauritzen, M., Dolgov, A. V., & Aschan, M. (2019). 'The role of marine mammals in the Barents Sea food web'. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 76(Supplement\_1), i37–i53. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsz136>.
5. Brand, M. (2002). *Canadian Journal of Archaeology / Journal Canadien d'Archéologie*, 26(2), 213–216. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41103418>.
6. Conley, H. A., Melino, M., & Bermudez Jr., J. S. (2020). 'The Ice Curtain: Bringing Transparency to the Arctic. Centre for Strategic and International Studies'.
7. Defence Committee - House of Commons. 'On Thin Ice: UK Defence in the Arctic'. Parliament UK.
8. Egorov, B. (2022, April 27). 'This was Russia's only 'window' into Europe for centuries'. *Russia Beyond*, <https://www.rbth.com/history/334978-history-of-arkhangelsk>.
9. Fouche, G., & Dickie, G. (2023, May 11). 'Norway takes over Arctic Council leadership from Russia'. *Reuters*.
10. Foxall, M. (2021). 'Is the Arctic Still a Forgotten Flank? Examining NATO Engagement in the Arctic'. University of Victoria.
11. Grady, J. (2021, March 22). 'Norwegian Officials: Russian Arctic Expansion Making Security Landscape 'Difficult''. *USNI News*.
12. Gricius, G. (2021, March 18). 'Geopolitical Implications of New Arctic Shipping Lanes'. The Arctic Institute – Center for Circumpolar Security Studies.
13. Highlights of Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework.  
<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1567697304035/1567697319793>.
14. Jawahar, B. (2020). 'Cooperation Between Russia and India in the Arctic: A Pipedream or a Strategic Necessity'. *Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Международные отношения*, 13(4), 488-506.

15. Jeffries, M. O., Overland, J. E., & Perovich, D. K. (2013). 'The Arctic Shifts to a New Normal'. *Phys. Today*, 66(10), 35.
16. Khorrami, N. (2022, June 21). 'India-Russia Cooperation in the Arctic and the Rising Prospect of Polarization in Arctic Governance.' The Arctic Institute – Center for Circumpolar Security Studies.
17. Koshkin, V. A. (2022). 'Delimitation of the Continental Shelf in the Central Arctic Ocean: Is It Possible Nowadays? *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*', 13, 393–406.
18. Morrison, D. (1999). 'THE EARLIEST THULE MIGRATION'. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology / Journal Canadien d'Archéologie*, 22(2), 139–156.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41103361>.
19. Norman, L., & Friesen, M. (n.d.). 'Pan-Arctic Population Movements: The Early Paleo-Inuit and Thule Inuit Migrations'.
20. Spitsbergen | Svalbard. (2020, February 12). 'The Spitsbergen Treaty'. [spitsbergen-svalbard.com](http://spitsbergen-svalbard.com).  
Copyright Rolf Stange.
21. Teslova, E. (2023, September 18). 'Russia starts military exercises of its Northern Fleet'. [Aa.com.tr](http://Aa.com.tr).
22. United States Department of State. (2021). 'The Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean Enters into Force'. Office of the Spokesperson.
23. Varner, J. (2021, February 8). 'Canada's Arctic Problem. Modern War Institute - West Point'.
24. Wilhelmsen, J., & Gjerde, K. L. (2018). 'Norway and Russia in the Arctic: New Cold War Contamination?'. *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*, 9, 382–407.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/48710573>.