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*General Assembly  
Chair Report*  
*Published on:  
24/03/2021*





## WMUN 4.0 General Assembly

### *Chair Report*

## **“The Militarisation of the Arctic”**

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### **Meet the General Assembly Secretariat**

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#### **President of General Assembly- Pavel Moroz**

Greetings delegates and welcome to the UNGA Chair report. My name is Pavel Moroz, the President of this committee; I will be taking care of you all along with the Chairs. As a Russian-Brit, I have been exposed to two very contrasting political views, which is why I decided to embark upon my MUN journey five years ago. It was in order to solidify my own personal rights and wrongs as well as find a well-founded perspective on the world as a whole. The agenda at hand, the militarisation of the Arctic, can be seen as deeply engrossing due to its potential severity, therefore I look forward to a stirring debate between delegates representing opposing superpowers. Good luck!

#### **Chairperson- Murtaza Akbari**

Hello Delegates! My name is Murtaza Akbari and I am a twelfth-grade high school student in Canada. After spending over eight years living in Bahrain, I have had the unique opportunity to experience living in two countries with contrasting political views. I got involved with MUN for the sole reason that I had no idea what it was, but I wanted to develop my ability to speak in front of people confidently and get a basic understanding of international politics. Over three years later, and I can confidently affirm that it is much more than politics. It provides you the

opportunity to expand your understanding of social, economic and environmental issues that plague our world today. I enjoy taking part in a variety of sports, including swimming, biking and cricket. I wish you all the best of luck in this conference. While MUN conferences can be very nerve wracking for many delegates, I encourage all delegates to try their best. The most important part about participating in MUN is to have fun!

### **Chairperson- Nydah Alanzi**

Hello everyone, and welcome! My name is Nydah Alanzi, and I'll be one of your chairs for this conference. I'm British and Saudi, so I grew up with two cultures, but I love learning about countries and their history and culture, which is what led me to participate in my first conference at 11. Now that I look back, I've realised that I've experienced so much, with others, learning new facts and meeting new faces. The agenda set for the UNGA is very intriguing, with many different criteria's under, I am very excited to be working with all of you. I hope that debate is heated and fruitful, wish you all the best of luck!

## Committee Introduction:

Distinguished delegates welcome to the General Assembly!

This organization is one of the principal organs of the United Nations. With the combination of all 193 Member States of the UN, this panel strives to maintain peacekeeping throughout nations and mainly deals with how to finance the peace operations. The Member States of this respective Assembly pays a certain amount of money for peace and security purposes, however, each Member State pays a different amount based on their economic wealth. The permanent Security Council Members, The United States, United Kingdom, Russian Federation, China, and France, are required to pay a larger amount due to their special role.

There are many committees in the General Assembly, but there are six main committees. In order, from the First Committee to the Sixth, *Disarmament & International Security, Economic & Financial, Social, Humanitarian & Cultural, Special Political & Decolonization, Administrative & Budgetary, Legal*. The First Committee, *Disarmament & International Security*, create solutions to problems that threaten peace amongst international communities. The Second Committee, *Economic & Financial*, deals with the financial aspect of nations and how to fund sustainable developments. Moreover, this committee aims to eradicate poverty and ensure food security. The *Social, Humanitarian & Cultural* Committee relates to Human Rights and how to advance on ongoing issues like women's equality or education for all children. The Fourth Committee, *Special Political & Decolonization*, adheres to the political issues that are not dealt with by the First Committee. The *Administrative & Budgetary* Committee plays a key role when financing

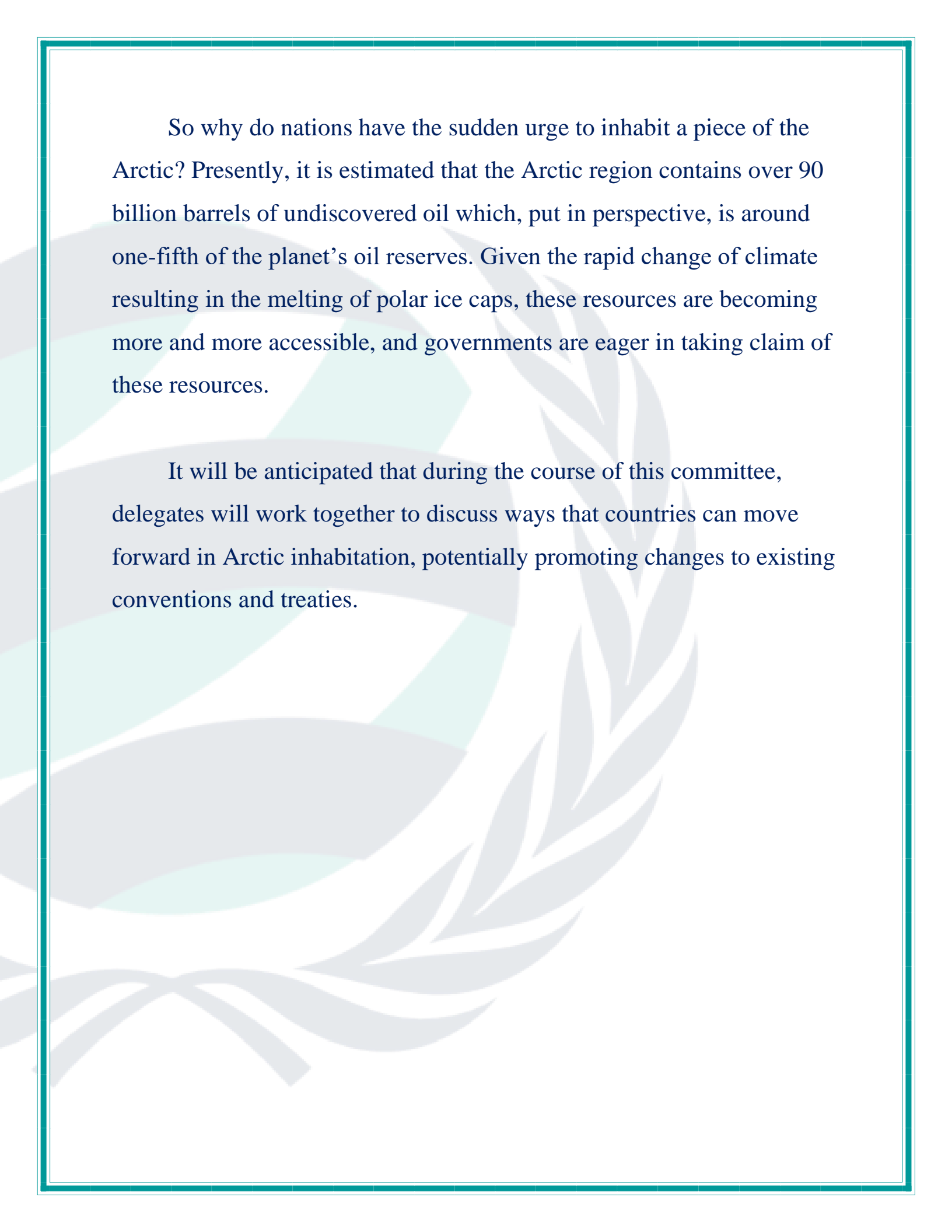
for any peaceful purposes are imposed by the Security Council. Lastly, the Sixth Committee, *Legal*, deals with any legal matters proposed to the General Assembly.

The General Assembly has many powers that allow it to function. They can elect who becomes the non-permanent Member States of the Security Council. They are allowed to make recommendations in order to maintain peace and more importantly, they may take action in any situation that causes a threat to peacekeeping when the Security Council has failed to do so. The General Assembly aims to build peace by first achieving its 17 Sustainable Development Goals they created in 2015. The goals are as followed; **No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, Partnerships for the Goals.**

## Topic Introduction:

The Arctic Region consists of parts of Canada, the Russian Federation, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and the United States. Geographically, it is the area located north of the Arctic Circle. The region's climate is distinguished by long, cold winters and short, cool summers, experiencing extreme solar radiation year round. However, the effects of climate change can be more prominently seen in the Arctic, with polar ice caps melting at a rate faster than ever seen in history. This is allowing for the increase of marine paths and routes to the Arctic.

Though several nations have claimed parts of the Arctic due to its great economical and military value, it is not privately owned by any specific nation. The Arctic is not privately owned by any specific region. Due to its great economical and military value, several countries have announced claims over the Arctic. All territorial claims to the Arctic region are regulated through the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which imposes coastal state jurisdiction and control in the Arctic Region. Due to the lack of clear regulations, many borders in the Arctic remain heavily disputed. Resultedly, the Arctic Council- presided by Canada- was formed to address issues faced by the governments in the Arctic, as well as those from indigenous descent..



So why do nations have the sudden urge to inhabit a piece of the Arctic? Presently, it is estimated that the Arctic region contains over 90 billion barrels of undiscovered oil which, put in perspective, is around one-fifth of the planet's oil reserves. Given the rapid change of climate resulting in the melting of polar ice caps, these resources are becoming more and more accessible, and governments are eager in taking claim of these resources.

It will be anticipated that during the course of this committee, delegates will work together to discuss ways that countries can move forward in Arctic inhabitation, potentially promoting changes to existing conventions and treaties.



## **Historical Background:**

The most premature instances of modern exploration in the Arctic region date all the way back to the 12th century. Europeans, who at the time were going through a certain renaissance, had initiated an exploration for alternate connecting routes for trade purposes. This was fueled by their interest in new markets located in the Orient, especially India and China. In the following centuries, many expeditions continued in efforts to find and expand more of these routes. Among these explorers were the English, Russians and Finnish.

The early 20th century marked the era of colonialism. New technologies developed as a result of the Industrial Revolution allowed for a greater supply of products. However, the rapid supply was unable to keep up with the limited amount of market, prompting nations to scramble to locate new trade paths. It is for this reason that Arctic exploration was even more critical to not only reach other markets, but also as a military strategy during the first world war.

Jumping forward to World War 2, the Arctic Region was very strategic as it was a direct route for supplies from the United States to the Soviet Union. A “Lend-Lease” agreement between the USA and USSR allowed arms trades to occur between the two states.

Furthermore, the USSR had many settlements in the Arctic region, making it a target for Nazi Germany.

There have been a lot of exploration and other activities happening throughout the post war duration and many countries near the Arctic region have laid claim to extended ice shelves but since the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which is at this point the only document relevant to regulating this aspect; hasn't been ratified. The nations who have bases and are conducting military operations in the Arctic include Canada, the Russian Federation, United States of America, Norway and Denmark.

To this date, Antarctica has been protected under the Antarctic treaty, which ensures that the land is not impacted from the negative implications of human settlement and to avoid the disruption of the region's ecology. Nations have been abiding by this treaty thus far, with the exception of strategically planned internationally regulated research stations.

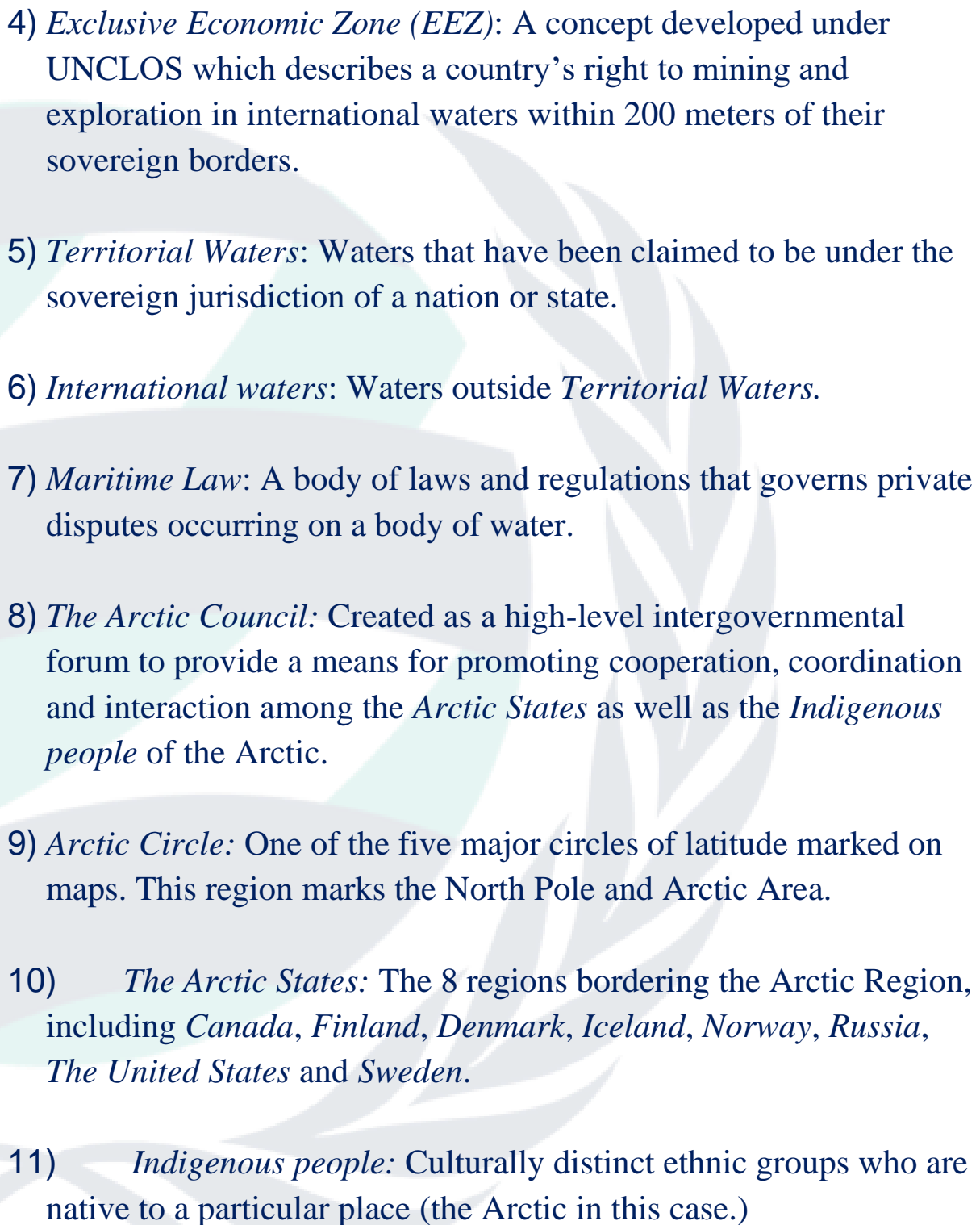
So far, there have been no major conflicts between nations regarding Arctic land claims, though disputes do exist. In 2009, US President George W. Bush released a 'Presidential National Security Directive' which indirectly disputed one of Canada's claims over a

portion of the Beaufort Sea. Likewise, Canada and Denmark have ongoing disputes which have been present for decades pertaining to an island located in the Arctic Region. Another concern addressed by some nations pertains to the point that a fifth of Russia's landmass is north of the Arctic Circle, thereby resulting in not much international say being there with regards to what can be done in this region.

There have been some recent updates which have positively impacted the development of the Arctic and is progressing the international community in the right direction to resolve this issue, such as the Ilulissat Declaration signed in 2008 further ensuring the environmental protection of the marine environment in and around the Arctic region. However, there has been little change recently regarding the international opinion of militarization in the Arctic regions.

### **Definitions of Key Terms:**

- 1) *Militarization*: The preparation of a government for military conflict or violence; the process of mobilizing troops in an area to defend land claims.
- 2) *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*: Military alliance between 30 European and North American nations.
- 3) *The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)*: Governs nations' sovereignty pertaining to international waters.

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- 4) *Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)*: A concept developed under UNCLOS which describes a country's right to mining and exploration in international waters within 200 meters of their sovereign borders.
  - 5) *Territorial Waters*: Waters that have been claimed to be under the sovereign jurisdiction of a nation or state.
  - 6) *International waters*: Waters outside *Territorial Waters*.
  - 7) *Maritime Law*: A body of laws and regulations that governs private disputes occurring on a body of water.
  - 8) *The Arctic Council*: Created as a high-level intergovernmental forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the *Arctic States* as well as the *Indigenous people* of the Arctic.
  - 9) *Arctic Circle*: One of the five major circles of latitude marked on maps. This region marks the North Pole and Arctic Area.
  - 10) *The Arctic States*: The 8 regions bordering the Arctic Region, including *Canada, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Russia, The United States* and *Sweden*.
  - 11) *Indigenous people*: Culturally distinct ethnic groups who are native to a particular place (the Arctic in this case.)

12) *Northwest Passage: A sea route that connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago*

**Guiding Questions:**

The following questions are simply a guide that delegates may use to assist them in getting started with their research. However, understanding the answers to the following questions from the perspective of your respective nation will greatly benefit your knowledge of this topic in preparation for the committee. There are also several resources attached, one of which contains every treaty created by the United Nations as well as the principles adopted by the United Nations.

**Preliminary Research Questions**

- 1) Who are your country's strongest allies and enemies? (\*your nation will typically have similar political views to your strongest allies)
- 2) What is your country's stance on militarisation of the arctic? Does it support it or not and whichever stance it has, how does it aim to justify and carry forward this aim?
- 3) Why is the Arctic region important?
- 4) What is the ideal state of international involvement and regulation that your country desires in regard to the agenda and how will your country want to work towards this?

## Militarisation and Sovereignty of the Arctic

- 1) Should there be excessive restriction in regard to the activities that can be conducted in the region concerning militarisation, or should it be left up to the country involved? What about the ecological implication of this problem?
- 2) Keeping the above question in mind, Russia stands as a case in point. Since  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the landmass of Russia is North of the Arctic Circle, what should be done here?
- 3) Has your country previously conducted military activity in the Arctic?
- 4) How can the United Nations ensure that no nation is negatively affected from activities taking place in the Arctic?
- 5) To what extent is the militarization of the Arctic a threat to global peace?
- 6) What role (if any) should non-Arctic countries play in the Arctic issue and how could their actions interfere in the Arctic countries' sovereignty?
- 7) How can territorial and economic issues around the Northwest Passage be resolved peacefully?

## Treaties and Agreements

- 1) Is there a necessity to negotiate a new international Arctic treaty?
  - a) If so, what should its role and improvements over international regulations be?
  - b) How could such a treaty help international disputes?
- 2) Have any nuclear non-proliferation treaties been established to keep the Arctic free of nuclear armament?

## Useful Resources (click on the links)

- [Country Research Tips](#)
- [Topic Research Tips](#)
- [In-depth Information Regarding the Arctic's History, Geography and more](#)

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