

FORUM:	Disarmament Commission
ISSUE:	Measures to Regulate the Militarization of the Arctic
STUDENT OFFICER:	JuneMo Kim
POSITION:	Deputy President of Disarmament Commission

Introduction

The most significant reason why countries desire the control and development rights of the Arctic Ocean belongs to the fact of its tremendous economic potential. 25% of dormant oil, 45% of dormant natural gas, valuable trade route, renewable energy source, these factors made the Arctic the most attractive land of opportunity to many nations around the world. Although according to the international law, the dominion of the North pole is not recognized, region 200 nautical miles apart from the pole is recognized as territorial waters of the nations sharing borders with the Arctic – U.S., Russia, Norway, Denmark and Canada.

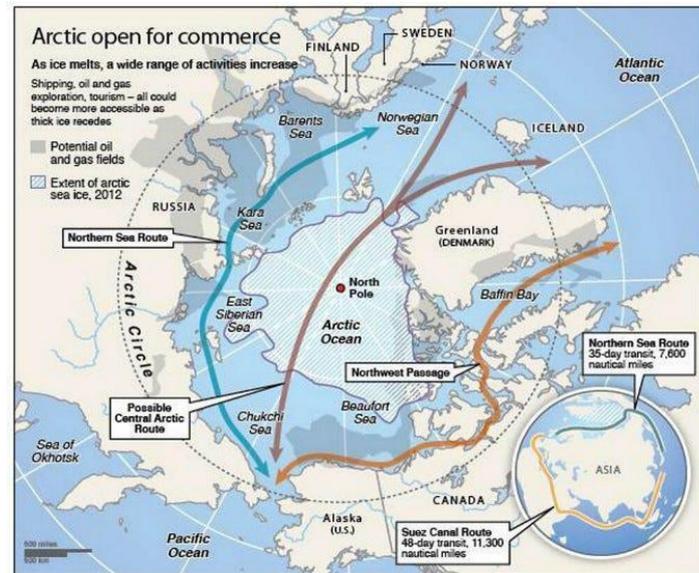
Looking back to the history of earth, the two poles of the globe have been pristine from the influence of humanity. The unprecedented development and expansion of man kind have caused various significant environmental destruction.

In the recent decades, arctic has become a rising priority of A-5 states' security interest. They all shown their multi-dimensional strategies that they are exercising sovereignty in their northern territory, achieving national security goal as well as stabilizing the regional order. Moreover, the US and Russia have further developed a specialized defense strategy regarding the arctic. Through such behaviors of states around the arctic, it has now become evident that increase in military deployment in arctic is inevitable.



Background

Recent Danish defence policies focus upon the changing geo-strategic significance of the Arctic and promulgate the establishment of a new Arctic military command headquartered in Nuuk, Greenland. Norway's 2007 Soria Moria Declaration asserted that the Arctic is their strategic priority in national defence and redeployed their military bases towards northern part of their country. Russia has designated the Arctic as their primary source of natural resources



and emphasized the significance of strong military component in 2020. Lastly, the United States have revamped its strategy regarding the Arctic to become more active and plans to modernize various capabilities, for instance, the ice breakers.

Stemming from these policy declarations, all A-5 states have increased their military training, capability development, and employment regionally. Of these, Russia has been the most active, resuming regional naval surface and air patrols in 2007-2008. Furthermore, the planting of the Russian flag at the bottom of the North Pole in 2007 not only stirred sensitivities over ownership of the Arctic, but it demonstrated Moscow's capability advantages vice those of their neighbours. Russia conducted the region's first ever amphibious assault as part of a larger military exercise in 2012 involving over 20,000 soldiers.

Canada has been active on a number of fronts to augment its military presence and experience in the region as well. Since 2007, Canada has conducted annually Operation Nanook, a multi-service training exercise designed to protect and to exercise capabilities within its Arctic national borders. The continued development of the Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships, although somewhat uncertain of particulars, is a new region-specific capability for the Canadian Navy.



TIANMUN

Problems Raised

Problem 1

First to discuss as a remarkable challenge posed by militarization of the Arctic is that of intense competition between nations who are willing to dominate the region. Recently, due to the global warming, the physical sense of distinguishing ice-free regions and permanent-froze regions in the Arctic has become evident. This led to the increase in great-power competition upon the region, because the two types of geography was followed by two types of politics – regular security politics, including through NATO, in the Atlantic; and tentatively more cooperative international politics among the coastal Arctic states. In other words, southern parts of the Arctic was subordinated to security of Atlantic under NATO, and the northern part of the Arctic, where is pretty much covered by thick glaciers, was where nations cooperated for their common interest. As the geography conditions of the Arctic is changing, the two types of politics loses its balance. Unlike states in the global South, who contain lower state capacity and more vulnerable to the negative impact of global climate change, in the Arctic, there are strong states who have the capacity to prevent problems and conflicts from arising. As a result, in the Arctic, climate change may actually enhance trade, research, and travel opportunities due to increased potential access. However, this might lead to smaller states to be targetted for geopolitically motivated invesments, such as China’s interest to buy lands in northern parts of Iceland.



Problem 2

Secondly, environmental factors. As great powers tend to develop the industrial potential in the region of Arctic and travel through the melted waters – for fishery, coal and natural gas – the Arctic will display a devastating result in their biodiversity. Massive excavation of natural resources in the Arctic will result in the same consequence as what is happening in the Amazon rainforest as well as other regions around the world. Oil industry, coal industry, the conventional resources are developed by extracting valuable nutrients from the earth; the desertification of forests in Africa, southeast Asia and Mongolia, for instance, is caused by excessive excavation of coal and oil which caused the lack of vital nutrition for plants of the regions. Same in the Arctic; massive extraction of natural resource will destroy the local ecosystem.



International Actions

Establishment of the Arctic Council in 1996.

The Arctic Council is a high -level intergovernmental forum that addresses issues faced by the Arctic governments and the indigenous people of the Arctic. The eight countries with sovereignty over the lands within the Arctic Circle constitute the members of the council: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. Outside these, there are some observer states. Only states with territory in the Arctic can be members of the Council. The 1996 Ottawa Declaration established the forum to promote cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states. It conducted studies about climate change, oil and gas, and Arctic shipping.



Action 2

Arctic Search and Rescue Argument, the first binding treaty of the Arctic council in 2011. This treaty coordinates the coverage and response of international search and rescue (SAR) in the Arctic, and establishes the area of SAR in which member states are responsible of. In view of the conflicting territorial claims in the Arctic, the treaty provides that "the delimitation of search and rescue regions is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of any boundary between States or their sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction."

Key Players

United States

United States as one of the strongest A-5 nations sharing its border to the Arctic, is revising its strategies in national defense to strengthen its control on the Arctic.

Russia

Russia as a strong military nation, is also wanting the dominium of Arctic waters for its economic potential.



Possible Solutions

Solution 1

International organizations' active engagement in Arctic affairs to ensure peace and security in the region of Arctic should be done. In order to do so, the United Nations' structure should reform. Making UN a more independent and objective actor among the international community is the best way to fulfil its purpose. For instance, the UN should have a parliament, just like the European Union, where every representative of its member states can speak for themselves. This will grant the UN a stronger legislative and executive power, therefore, enables the organization to act upon situation like militarization of the Arctic to maintain stability.

Solution 2

Strengthen the role of the Arctic Council. Construct a system where every economic movement is managed and monitored by the organization, similar to the government of the Arctic. This organization shall guarantee free trade, development rights and security to eliminate excuses for nations to deploy their forces for protecting their interest and thus creating tension in the region. In other words, make the Arctic Council more politically active.



Glossary

A-5 states

States sharing borders with the Arctic, major states who want to strengthen their influence in the Arctic. (United States, Russia, Norway, Denmark and Canada)

NATO

Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization. A security community where only America's European allies can join.

Geopolitics

Politics, especially international relations, as influenced by geographical factors.



Sources

journal.forces.gc.ca/vol15/no3/eng/PDF/CMJ153Ep18.pdf

<https://carnegieeurope.eu/2019/11/28/military-and-environmental-challenges-in-arctic-pub-80424>

