

# NATO

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## **Letter from the Secretary General**

Esteemed participants,

I am honored to welcome you all here as the Secretary General of the first edition of MUNEA'25.

Our Academic team has created these guides to lead a pathway in your journey. They are meant to support your research and make your experience more productive, both during your sessions and throughout the conference. We will be inspired to closely watch your progress in the committees as both the Academic and Organization team.

In addition, I would like to extend my special thanks to my DSGs, Alp Arslan Şahin and Yağız Eren Şahin who helped me a lot and also tired me out. Even though we disagreed on most of the points we discussed, I am really proud of them.

As the Secretary General of the conference, and with our goal of contributing the development of a qualified Turkish youth, I wish all our participants, from first timers to experienced ones, a meaningful three-day journey in advancing their diplomatic skills and knowledge.



## **Letter from the Under Secretary General**

Esteemed Participants and Distinguished Ambassadors;

I would like to start this letter by introducing myself; I'm Simal Dođanođlu, currently an 11th grader at Meltem Ayhan High School. I'll be serving as your Under Secretary General throughout the conference.

This study guide upon your access has been written with utmost perfectionism and as the people responsible me and my academic assistants have done our best throughout the preparation process of this document. Please keep in mind that for active participation in the committee, the proper comprehension of this document is imperative.

This agenda has been chosen due to the fact that it is recent, crucial and engaging and I hope that you'll both enjoy and learn from this committee.

I want to thank Melis Eda Yılmaz, Alp Arslan Şahin and the executive board for giving me the opportunity to make this committee a reality. Next, my academic assistants: Ekin Toprak and Arda Şen. I wish to thank both of you and would like to mention that you have a great future in Model UN. Ekin, you had been one of my closest friends throughout the time that we had known each other and I'll be entirely grateful that we had met. I want to thank Arda, for his contributions and for his great companionship. You're one of the sweetest people I've known. And Tani, for always being there for me during my worst and my best.

I would also like to thank Alin Kayalı, the ACAS of LEGAL; although we don't talk often, you're one of my favourite MUN people.

I remain grateful to all those who contributed, including those I may have unintentionally omitted.

If you have queries regarding the committee or the study guide, don't hesitate to contact me at [simaldoganoglu@gmail.com](mailto:simaldoganoglu@gmail.com)

Kind regards,

Simal Dođanođlu - USG of NATO.

## **Letter from the Academic Assistant**

Honorable Participants, Distinguished Ambassadors of NATO,

I am incredibly honored to welcome you all to MUNEA'25. My name is Ekin Toprak and I will be serving as the Academic Assistant of NATO. I am a 10th grade student at Ted Ankara College High School.

To begin with, I'd like to thank my Under-Secretary-General Şimal Doğanoglu for giving me such an opportunity to serve as an academic assistant and for being by my side since my first MUN experience. You are one of my favourite people. I'd also like to thank the Secretary General of MUNEA'25, Melis Eda Yılmaz, for being such a good friend of mine and the amount of effort she spent on our committee. Secondly, I'd like to thank my fellow academic assistant Arda Şen, for always supporting me in every way. Your emotional intelligence always impresses me. Thirdly, I would like to thank my fellow mun buddy, Farin Rostami for guiding my way and providing me with unlimited support in everything. I can not thank you enough for the number of things you have done for me. Also, I would like to thank Alin Kayalı, the Academic Assistant of LEGAL, for all the fun memories we have together. You were with me in my first, unforgettable chairboard experience. Lastly, I would like to thank İlgi Gülten Çevik, for introducing me to the Model United Nations and helping me improve through my journey.

NATO has a special place in my heart, with it being my first Model United Nations experience and being the committee I met with my dear Under-Secretary-General, Şimal Doğanoglu and my Secretary General Melis Eda Yılmaz.

My advice for the committee members of NATO would be to read the study guide thoroughly and use the internet for additional research.

If you have queries regarding the committee or the study guide, don't hesitate to contact me at [ekin2964@gmail.com](mailto:ekin2964@gmail.com)

Kind regards,

Ekin Toprak - Academic Assistant of NATO

## Letter from the Academic Assistant

Highly esteemed participants,

My name is Arda Şen, and I will be serving as one of the academic assistants (ACAS) of the conference's NATO committee. I am honoured to welcome all of you to MUNEA'25. I am a 10th-grade student studying Pre-IB or MYP at IDF Private Bilkent High School. I started MUN in November of 2023 and it is my first time managing a committee, making me really eager for what is to come.

During the process of writing this guide, my USG, ACAS and I tried to warm you up to the committee and give you the most crucial information regarding our agenda item, particularly emphasizing the role of the Arctic in our committee. We believe the agenda item is one which relates to one of the most crucial regions in the world right now and I highly believe you will be engaged all throughout preparing for the conference and the committee which follows the preparation. The guide lays out the basics of all you should know for the committee, so please make sure that you read the entirety of it and understand it well. Additionally, I highly suggest you conduct further research, especially regarding your own stance on the agenda item. In general, please read and comprehend the entire guide while also conducting your own research, particularly regarding your stance on the agenda item.

Other than just stating the importance this guide serves for the function of the committee, I would also like to express my gratitude to several individuals. First of all, I would like to strongly thank and express my gratitude towards the Secretary-General Melis Eda Yılmaz and the Deputy-Secretary-Generals Alp Şahin and Yağız Eren Şahin for making this incredible experience a possibility. MUNEA'25 could not have been the same if you three were not here. Additionally, the Director-General and the Deputy-Director-General Tuna Akar and Ege Ulubatlı were also incredibly important in turning all of the wonderful ideas of MUNEA'25 into reality. I would like to thank my USG Şimal Doğanoglu, whom I consider my MUN companion. You are such an inspirational, hardworking and in general an amazing person. I am infinitely grateful I have such a friend and USG as you, and I know all our delegates will witness your bubbly character through the guide and conference. Finally, my ACAS Ekin Toprak is one of my closest friends and is someone highly deserving of a thank you. You have such a lively character full of soul, and your professionalism in MUN is inevitable. There are so many others I would like to thank. I hope they know who they are and that I am astoundingly grateful for them as well.

If you have queries regarding the committee or the study guide, don't hesitate to contact me at [ardasento@gmail.com](mailto:ardasento@gmail.com)

Kind regards,

Arda Şen - Academic Assistant of NATO

## **Introduction to the Committee**

### **2.1 History and Structure of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also known as NATO, is a military alliance established in 1949 with the aim of countering the Soviet armies stationed in central and Eastern Europe after WW2. Once the Cold War had been concluded, NATO received its recognition as a “cooperative security” organization.

Inspecting the history and structure of NATO in more detail, it has to be known that Western Europe was economically and militarily drained following World War 2. The armies of the Western Allies had been significantly impacted by the devastating results of the war which led to a rapid and drastic reduction in their power. Not only was western Europe struggling but the Soviet Union was in its glory days during the 1940s and was significantly more powerful than western Europe. Newly powerful communist parties (the ideology of the Soviet Union) had emerged in France and Italy, and the armies of the Soviet Union were dominating all the states of Central and Eastern Europe. By the year 1948, Communists under Moscow’s sponsorship had established their control of the governments of the countries within Eastern and Central Europe in order to suppress all non-communist political activities in the region. With this, the Iron Curtain, coined by Winston Churchill, had emerged in Europe. The Iron Curtain was a political, military and economical barrier separating the Communist states of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe from the non-communist states of Western Europe. Additionally, wartime cooperation between the Western Allies and the Soviets also ceased. Germany was also divided into two, perfectly reflecting the concept of the Iron Curtain. There was West Germany, a Democratic state, and East Germany, a Communist state.

In the year 1948, the United States launched the Marshall Plan which gave the states of Western and Southern Europe economic support as long as all of them cooperated together as democratic states. Militarily, the Brussels Treaty of 1948 established a collective-defense agreement, known as the Western European Union. However, a larger military organization would be needed to combat the Soviets and their communist ideology. Taking this into consideration, the United States, Canada

and Britain began discussing a multilateral collective-defense organization in order to enhance western Europe's security. As this discussion reached the governments of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Norway, NATO was formed in April 1949. Twelve countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington, DC, on April 4, 1949. From Europe there was Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. From North America, there were the United States and Canada. The organization had three main goals. First of all, western Europe was aimed to be rebuilt after the devastating effects of World War 2. Secondly, it aimed to protect western Europe from the effects of communist states in the east. Finally, it aimed to increase cooperation among western European countries. It wanted to prevent the return of European nationalism, which was a factor for the beginning of World War 2. Collective defense was also a core objective of NATO, as article 5 of the treaty states "an armed attack against one or more of [the members] . . . shall be considered an attack against them all."



*Figure 1: Signing of the NATO Treaty, April 1949*

Structurally, NATO is composed of military representatives of the member states, who meet at least twice a year. The headquarters of the organization were first established in London, 1949. Then, it was carried to Paris where it would remain for over a decade. Leaders named this headquarters the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, or SHAPE. SHAPE was a central location where the officials of

member states could come together in order to make decisions in accordance with their policies.



*Figure 1.1: The Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in the 1950s*

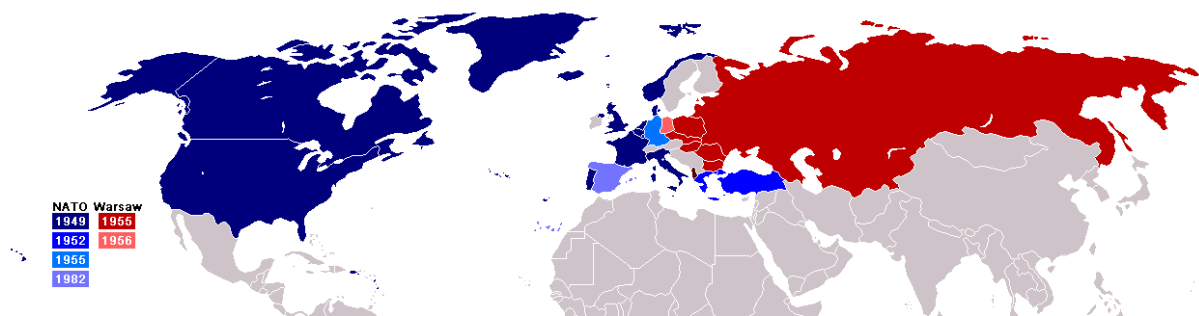
The diverse members of NATO and their military units would be managed by those in power and the first supreme allied commander of Europe, also known as SACEUR, was US military general Dwight D. Eisenhower. He played an influential and crucial role in World War II, earning him this title. The position of the SACEUR was first created in 1950, and the person with this title would oversee military operations and obtain forces from member countries. Another important title within NATO was the secretary general, established in 1952. The Secretary General would guide NATO's decision-making process and administration. The first Secretary General of NATO was Lord Hastings Lionel Ismay, a United Kingdom official.

As NATO grew, more countries started joining in the 1950s. Türkiye, or at the time Turkey, and Greece joined in 1952 with West Germany following in 1955. All states wishing to join had to receive admission from all other members in the treaty and all newly admitted countries to the pact had to contribute to collective defense. NATO's adoption of a massive retaliation doctrine in the 1950s was another of its defining policies of the time. This meant that a nuclear attack on any NATO members



would be retaliated using nuclear forces owned by NATO. This functioned as a mechanism to deter the Soviet forces to use nuclear forces on NATO members.

The more NATO grew, the more the USSR wanted to match it with its own treaty, which would be the Warsaw Pact. This was a collective defense treaty in response to West Germany joining NATO, which would solidify the Cold War between Eastern and Western powers. The members of the Warsaw Pact were the USSR, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania. All of these promised to defend each other in case of an attacking country. However, all of the countries of the Warsaw Pact were not happy with it. For example, 1956's Hungary wanted to leave the pact as they also wanted the USSR forces within Hungary to leave. Poland was also resisting Soviet control that year. Anyhow, Europe was divided into two at the time; NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Neither side would directly attack each other, as both sides would respond in such a scenario.



*Figure 2: Members of NATO vs the Warsaw Pact*

The power-hungry postures of the two sides post World War II softened in the 1960s as the focus was more on getting Western and Eastern bloc countries to develop friendlier relationships. For example, US president John F. Kennedy adopted a “flexible response” approach in the early 1960s which replaced the massive retaliation against the aggression of the Soviet Union. This approach would lead to responses that were lighter than that of nuclear forces against the Soviet Union.

The conflict between the East and the West would continue throughout the 1960s as the Cold War. Here, the East and the West were conflicting although it was not directly using any sort of weaponry or attacks against each other. Rather, the two sides were clashing as one was hoping to become more advanced than the other in terms of several aspects. One of the most significant of these aspects was with the

Space Race. The USSR and western Europe, particularly the United States, were racing against each other to see which would reach space first and land on the moon the fastest. Although neither of the countries conducted attacks on each other during the Space Race, the fact that they were racing each other against the clock to reach space the quickest inadvertently made them conflict with each other. As it was accepted that the United States landed on the moon first, the Space Race was also considered to have been won by the United States. This ultimately gave American citizens the idea that they were living in the superior nation within this race. The Space Race was only one of the many fields the West and the East were racing on during the Cold War. Another significant symbol dividing the West and the East was the Berlin Wall, constructed by the USSR to divide western and eastern Germany which was then later demolished.



*Fig. 3:  
Destruction of the Berlin Wall*

Despite its complex history, NATO works to ensure the safety of all its members today (particularly against modern day Russia) and to combat other humanitarian crises. Within this committee, the role that NATO has to ensure the safety of the arctic against military powers and other hazards will be discussed and witnessed.

## **2.2 NATO Member States**

NATO currently has 32 member states in Europe and North America. On 4 April 1949, the foreign ministers from 12 countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty (also known as the Washington Treaty) at the Departmental Auditorium in Washington, D.C. These 12 founding members were Belgium, Canada, Denmark,

France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The first two members to become a part of NATO after its founding in 1949 were Greece and Türkiye. This enabled NATO to reinforce its southern flank. Extending security to south-eastern Europe was strategically important, and communist influence was curbed in Greece and Türkiye.

Germany later joined in May 1955 as a result of several years of deliberations among Western leaders and the German government. Before the reunification of Germany in 1990, the Federal Republic of Germany or West Germany, became a member of NATO. However, as Germany reunified, Germany as a whole became a member of NATO.

Spain was the next country to join despite the hardships it had gone through in order to. The end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975, the military coup in 1981 and the rise of the Socialist Party were the aspects that made it the most difficult for it to join.

An important enlargement of NATO was seen in 1999, as the Berlin Wall had fallen and the Warsaw Pact had dissolved. Countries in Central and Eastern Europe wanted to join. In 1995, NATO carried out research on how it would admit new member states into its alliance. NATO enlargement would contribute to enhanced stability and security, especially after the Cold War. This led to Czechia, Hungary and Poland being invited to begin accession talks. Amid these talks, these three countries became the first to be admitted as former Warsaw Pact members in 1999. Following the accession talks with these three new member states, NATO released MAP or the Membership Action Plan. This would lay down all the necessary preparations a country wishing to enter NATO would follow. Similarly to how Czechia, Hungary and Poland were admitted, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia were also admitted in 2004. All seven countries had participated in the MAP before acceding to NATO, and they were all situated in Eastern and Central Europe.

Albania and Croatia became the next members to be added to NATO following MAP, yet again. Albania had participated in the MAP since 1999, and Croatia since 2002. In July 2008, they both signed Accession Protocols and became official members of NATO on 1 April 2009. Since then, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Finland also became members of NATO. The newest member admitted is Sweden, joining in 2024.

### **2.3 NATO Policies**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's policies are based upon the North Atlantic Treaty.

The North Atlantic Treaty is a military alliance treaty that was signed in Washington D.C. on 4 April 1949 by several states. Those states were consisting of; Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The treaty consists of 14 articles, with each article focusing on international cooperation in the member states. Main points of the treaty is;

The treaty highlights making NATO a single defense mechanism in case of any threats against any member state. In such conditions, all member states agreed to exercise the right of individual or collective self defence in the Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. It also mentions that such actions including the use of armed force shall be taken in order to maintain security of the North Atlantic region. It also mentions the significance of the immediate report of the armed attack to the Security Council.

The treaty emphasizes the consultation of states in any potential threat against any state. It mentions the significance of NATO staying as a union, and makes sure that the NATO member states do not sign any agreements and treaties that go against the

organization's policies. It also gives the right to create subsidiary bodies in order for the organization to work more effectively. One of these bodies, which is a defence committee, shall be established immediately. This committee shall suggest actions to be taken mentioned in Article 3 and Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

It's important to remember a key point mentioned in the Treaty, which is that after the treaty has been in force for ten years a country may request to review it and if they do, all member states consult together in order to review the Treaty keeping in mind the current peace and security of the North Atlantic region. The point in taking such action is making sure that the North Atlantic treaty fits the adjusting global standard, changes and needs.

Further information and the full articles of the North Atlantic Treaty can be found in the internet website of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

### **3. Introduction to the Agenda Item**

#### **3.1 Overview and Related Information About the Arctic Region**

##### **3.1.1.1 Location & Environment of the area**

The Arctic is the area within the Arctic Circle, including the North Pole and the Arctic Ocean. An important characteristic of the Arctic is its many glaciers and rivers of ice formed from snow falling over thousands or even millions of years. Glaciers spread and move with freezing and thawing temperatures and by the force of their own weight and gravity. Glaciers form on land, near lakes, and along the coast. The Arctic region also includes the tundra—meaning “treeless plain”—ecosystem. One defining characteristic of the tundra climate is its permafrost, which refers to permanently frozen ground. Permafrost, combined with a long season of cold and high winds, are the primary reasons for a nearly treeless zone in the arctic. Trees are unable to spread roots in the permafrost, and leaves and branches would catch the wind and

be blown down. The northern boundary of the Arctic tundra is called the northern ice cap. The taiga, also called boreal forest, is a zone of scattered evergreen trees, and is the southern boundary of the Arctic tundra. The imaginary line where the treeless tundra changes to taiga is called the tree line.



*Figure 5: The Arctic region on a map*

As for its climate, The Arctic region experiences cold winters and cool summers, with low precipitation and high winds creating the illusion of continuous snowfall. Average winter temperatures can be as low as  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$ , and the coldest recorded temperature is around  $-68^{\circ}\text{F}$ . Coastal Arctic climates are moderated by oceanic influences, with warmer temperatures and heavier snowfalls. Current global warming is causing climate change in the Arctic, including Arctic sea ice decline, diminished ice in the Greenland ice sheet, and Arctic methane emissions. Greenland's ice sheet melting is linked to polar amplification. The Arctic region is shrinking due to poleward migration of the planet's isotherms, leading to Arctic sea ice shrinkage. There is a large variance in predictions of Arctic sea ice loss, with models showing near-complete to complete loss in September from 2035 to 2067. All of these will have an impact on the climate and environment of the Arctic and are covered in more detail later on throughout the guide.

In terms of wildlife within the Arctic, it can be said that the Arctic is a unique ecosystem with a complex food web, supporting large fisheries and large populations



of migratory birds. Arctic wildlife has special adaptations to survive in their icy and changeable environment, such as hollow hair for insulation, black skin for sun absorption, and blubber for insulation. Migratory birds use the Arctic for feeding, nesting, and raising their young, often migrating to and from all 50 states and six continents. The Arctic Ocean is home to an array of wildlife, including endangered bowhead whales, polar bears, beluga whales, ringed seals, and Pacific walruses. America's Arctic includes the 19.6-million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which hosts over 200 bird species that migrate to the refuge for breeding in the summer. The refuge also hosts the 130,000-member porcupine caribou herd, which migrates more than 1,400 miles across Canada and Alaska each spring to calve in the refuge's coastal plain.

The 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPPRA) is the largest single tract of public land in the country, providing critical habitat for an array of migratory waterfowl that use the four major U.S. flyways to reach all 50 states and many other countries. The reserve is home to terrestrial and marine mammals, including grizzly bears, polar bears, caribou, wolves, wolverines, beluga whales, bowhead whales, walruses, and several species of seals. The 490,000-animal Western Arctic caribou herd is the state's largest, and the Teshekpuk Lake caribou herd, with about 67,000 animals, is a primary source of subsistence for thousands of Alaska Native residents.

*Figure 6: The National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska of Russia*



### **3.1.2. Economic Resources of the Area**

The Arctic is a vast part of the world. Therefore, it has sources which can be categorized into several different categories. For the sake of this committee, we can divide the sources of the Arctic into mineral sources, renewable sources (biological and non-biological), as well as human sources.

In terms of mineral sources, the Arctic has been heavily exploited in search of economic resources. However, it is true that it contains 8% of the surface of the planet and 15% of the land area, which gives it plenty of significant sources to be exploited. These sources are also a mix of renewable and nonrenewable sources, making it even more enticing for exploitation. Some of these sources are known and being utilized, but there could be enormous expansion if it is required and thought desirable.

First of all, the Arctic contains a plethora of mineral resources, which are currently the Arctic region's most important resources. Among these sources, hydrocarbons play an especially important role. Two of the world's major producing areas for oil and natural gas lie in the Arctic. Northwestern Siberia contains a petroliferous province discovered in the 1950s, stretching 500 miles from east to west and 750 miles from north to south. This region alone produces a large proportion of Russia's oil and natural gas. Similarly to the given region in Russia, the North Slope of Alaska produces about one-fifth of the United States' oil and natural gas. However, all that is produced within this region only accounts for about 11 percent of U.S. consumption. There are smaller exploitations in the Canadian Northwest Territories (oil at Norman Wells) and in other areas of Russia (oil and natural gas in the Pechora basin and natural gas in Sakha). Further discoveries of oil and natural gas within the Arctic region are highly likely. Drilling is proceeding offshore, and there are promising areas at many points north of Russia, where the continental shelf is very wide. Outside Russia there has been exploration off Svalbard and West and East

Greenland. Although these exploration processes are essential, they have not had any serious success. The successful development of these hydrocarbon resources depends largely on pipeline transport. Both the Siberian and the Alaskan fields are effectively served by this means.



*Figure 7: Drilling applications*

Hard-rock mining is also well developed, especially in Russia, where the former Soviet government's desire for national self-sufficiency led to the discovery of many resources. Of all the centres for drilling applications, most are located around Murmansk and Norilsk. The only significant source of diamonds in Russia is in Sakha, which can also be classified as within the Arctic region. There is also gold, tin, nickel, copper, platinum, and cobalt, together with iron ore, coal, and apatite.



*Figure 8: Mir Mine, Russia.*

When examining biological renewable sources, the most important of these seems to be fish, which provides an important source of food. The Barents,

Greenland, and Bering seas are all rich fishing grounds. These put together produce around 10 percent of the world's marine catch, but overfishing at its present levels is threatening the future of the fish for these reasons. The Russian fishing industry has its most important centre located in Murmansk. The reason why the Russian fishing industry has its centre in Murmansk is because the port of Murmansk is the only major port in Russia that is ice-free year-round. Russia additionally operates an extensive fishery in the Barents and Norwegian seas—areas from which other countries are effectively excluded by the rules governing exclusive economic zones (i.e., those areas adjacent to territorial seas to which countries retain exclusive rights to economic exploitation, though international navigation is permitted). There is also significant freshwater fishing in Russia, especially in Siberia. Although it is relatively small in volume, it includes rare and delectable species such as chiefly salmonids. These cater to the luxury market, providing economic power. In Canada likewise, the arctic char is a luxurious species. Whaling, once considerable, has ceased, but sealing continues in the White Sea and off Labrador, where there are populations of harp seals.

On land, the Reindeer is the Arctic's most valuable biological resource. In Russia and Scandinavia, there are approximately three million reindeer in the form of domesticated groups which provide meat for many of the Indigenous peoples who tend them. There is a smaller population of wild reindeer, or caribou, which are hunted in some areas. Fur is another significant source of the Arctic, and it was the search for fur-bearing mammals such as foxes that made Europeans sail across the north of Asia and America to the Arctic. The value of some furs was very high, and so the industry was able to establish a solid economic base that survived several centuries. However, the decreasing amount of those who choose to wear and purchase fur, as well as the objections of environmentalists has severely impacted this economy.

Although frost-resistant varieties of cereals and vegetables have been bred in the Arctic, these are among the few plant-based sources produced in the Arctic, as its climate is not effective for farming plants.

As for non-biological renewable resources, the most significant within the Arctic is fresh water. Several of the world's largest rivers flow into the Arctic Ocean, giving opportunity for two possible developments. The first is to divert the flow, or part of it, to regions short of water; the second is to use the energy in hydroelectric schemes. Though these would both be productive uses of rivers, they cannot both happen at the same time. River diversion has also been a topic of discussion however it has not been proceeded with primarily due to environmental reasons. For example, Arctic waters in Eurasia and North America were originally planned to be diverted to Central Asia and California, however, this plan did not follow through. Hydroelectric stations producing energy from the flow of the water have been built at relatively low latitudes, although projects which would have been near the river mouths were not finalized. Engineering projects regarding hydroelectric stations interested Soviet designers, and the hydroelectric stations that were built were, at the time, some of the world's largest.

Human resources also play a huge part in boosting the economic significance of the Arctic. Of these resources, one which is often overlooked is often tourism towards the Arctic, which saw an incredible growth, particularly during the second half of the 20th century. Sport hunting and fishing are offered to small parties via light aircraft. Cruise ships, which hold hundreds of passengers, travel to Svalbard and Arctic Norway, crossing into the Kara Sea to and from the Yenisey estuary. However, tourism does pose a danger that may destroy the other resources of the region. Solitude and lack of human activity are among the most important aspects of the Arctic, and increased tourism could harm these.

A part of sources can also be transportation which can be analyzed as water, land and air transport. The Arctic, an ocean surrounded by land, has been a significant transportation hub since the 15th century. As for water transportation, Russia's largest use of water transport is the sea route along the north coast of Eurasia, known as the Northeast Passage or Northern Sea Route. This route, serviced by about 20 icebreakers, carries cargoes totaling several million tons annually to and from the



termini at Murmansk and Vladivostok. The shallow water necessitates the use of small ships of up to 20,000 tons deadweight. The season is determined by sea ice, with efforts to extend it to year-round navigation. The route serves ports at the mouth of major rivers, with the principal freight being general cargo and fuel into the north and ore and timber out of it. The river system is also extensively used, with large fleets of barges, tugs, and hydrofoils.

Land transport in the American north is less developed due to the high cost of building roads and rail beds. The Alaska Railroad is the only railway in the American north, running from Seward to Fairbanks. Other roads include the Alaska Highway, which connects the continental US and Alaska, and the Dempster Highway, which reaches Inuvik, Northwest Territories. Greenland lacks intercity roads or railways. The Scandinavian north has a railway connecting its southern metropolises to Narvik and a road along the coast to the Russian frontier. Russia has the longest stretch of both rail and road, with railways to Murmansk, the mouth of the Ob River, Pur River, and Yakutsk. The Magadan Highway, a mirror image of the Alaska Highway, was built in the mid-20th century. Vehicles capable of traveling off the road, usually in winter, have been developed in both the US and Russia, but are generally not capable of carrying large loads.



*Figure 9:  
Magadan  
Highway,  
Siberia*



As for air transport, the northlands provide ideal air transport conditions, with well-developed local scheduled services and many population centers accessible only by air. Alaska and Canada are notable for their light aircraft services, while Greenland uses helicopter services for coastal settlements. Hovercraft were initially tested in the Canadian north but were found disappointing. Since the 1950s, long-distance flights between Europe and North America have traversed Arctic air space, initially using military routes from World War II. As aircraft range increased, nonstop flights between western Europe and the American west coast followed great circles farther north, sometimes passing within 600 miles of the North Pole.

### **3.1.1.3 Geopolitical Significance of the Area**

The Arctic is located on the northernmost part of the Earth. It consists of several nations, and waters. These nations are ; northern Norway, northernmost Sweden, northern Finland, Russia, the United States, Denmark, Canada and northern Iceland. The waters are; the Arctic Ocean, Barents , Kara, Laptev, East Siberian, Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, the White Sea, the Lincoln Sea. The area has significant geopolitical power.

One of the main reasons is the shipping routes in the area. The Arctic's active shipping routes; such as North-West Passage, North-East Passage and traditional shipping routes that go around the area are actively used by so many countries such as; China, Russia, France and Belgium. These shipping routes used for shipping in between China and Russia usually leave from ports in those countries; such as the Xiamen Port, and travel from the South China Sea; all the way through Laptev Sea and the Arctic Area, to arrive at Russian Ports such as the The Port of Novorossiysk.

Apart from the shipping routes between Russia and China, the Arctic is one of the essential points in a lot of shipping routes, making it geopolitically significant. The main problem with the shipping routes is that as a result of global warming, Arctic Ice melts, making new and shorter shipping routes available for countries. This situation has potential dangers; both for competition between countries and the Arctic's environment. Further information upon this will be available on 4.6 of the guide.

Another reason why the Arctic has significant geopolitical power is the diverse resources it has. As mentioned in articles **3.1.1.2** and **4.3** of the guide, the Arctic has abundant resources countries can benefit from. It contains massive reserves of oil, gas, and minerals which are resources that are increasingly accessible now that the ice is melting. The fact that the Arctic is not an officially claimed area by any country and divided by 7 countries, makes it attractive to more countries because it seems like the land belongs to nobody and countries can exploit the resources without any consequences.

Third answer for the previously stated question would be the alluring security pathways it offers and the routes between these pathways of high demand. Russia has recently invested in military infrastructure in the Arctic, increasing tension with NATO. As mentioned before, the Arctic is controlled by seven countries, one of them being Denmark. Denmark's presence in the Arctic serves as a counterbalance to Russian expansion. In potential conflicts, countries who control the Arctic and are member states of NATO have to unite in order to combat external forces. But with the increasing tensions between these countries, such a thing is not effortless.

There are a lot more reasons why the Arctic is geopolitically significant, which will be mentioned throughout the guide. The main point that needs to be understood is that because of many reasons, the Arctic is a turbulent zone for nations, all wanting to benefit from the incredible economic, and political opportunities the Arctic offers.

### 3.1.1.4 Indigenous Inhabitants

The Arctic is home to various Indigenous communities. These communities come from backgrounds all over the world.

Some of these may include;

*Saami* in circumpolar areas of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Northwest Russia,

*Nenets, Khanty, Evenk and Chukchi* in Russia,

*Aleut, Yupik and Inuit (Iñupiat)* in Alaska,

*Inuit (Inuvialuit)* in Canada,

*Inuit (Kalaallit)* in Greenland.

Saami people's ethnic backgrounds come mainly from Finland, while Aleut people are related to the Aleutian Islands, the Pribilof Islands, the Shumagin Islands, and the far western part of the Alaskan Peninsula.

Each Indigenous community has diverse physical features, cultures, languages and traditions. Around forty to ninety tongues are spoken in the Arctic by indigenous communities. These languages are incredibly diverse and full of knowledge. For example, within the Saami language, there are over 300 terms for describing snow and snow conditions alone. Inuit languages also have detailed descriptions of things crucial to their ways of life. An example may be; the English language describes a beluga merely as a 'beluga whale'. But in Inuvialuit language, people differentiate whales by gender, age, colour and specific features.

Apart from languages, these people have traditions that have been passed on for thousands of years by generations. Some of these include; sustainable hunting, fishing, reindeer herding, and harvesting. These traditions have cultural, social, and spiritual value. It is important to keep in mind that since these people have been living in the Arctic for years, they have learnt how to co exist within the ecosystems and respectfully use the environment.

Official statistics do not necessarily recognize indigenous populations separately, although differences occur. Although these communities' cultures have undergone change due to globalization of the western way of life, state policies, modern transport and the introduction of a mixed economy; they have kept a huge part of their culture. This may include; distinct language, reindeer herding, fishing and hunting. Even though these communities have kept some of their traditions and communities alive, they are currently facing some threats. One of these threats is climate change. As a result of weather changes and occurrence of thin ice, traditional harvesting activities of Indigenous people are negatively impacted. These events make hunting more dangerous. It is also important to keep in mind that Indigenous people have a deep connection with the Arctic nature and the changes the Arctic's nature is facing may affect them physically and emotionally.

When it comes to the relation between countries and Indigenous communities, which is mentioned in **4.1** of the guide, it is important to note down that there have been agreements signed in order to settle Indigenous people's land claims and stimulate. These treaties are mostly about sovereignty and modern land claims. One example for these agreements may be; Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. This agreement was enacted in 1971, and it was signed by former American president Richard Nixon.

### **3.1.2 History of the actions taken in the Arctic**

For the context of this committee, the history of the actions taken within the Arctic can be classified as the history of expeditions and the history of Arctic conflict.

In terms of Arctic expeditions, the first explorers to the Arctic relied on primitive tools and methods. Among these methods was the usage of wooden ships, which were fortified against ice, guided by simple compasses. However, these early expeditions were often fraught with danger, as limited understanding of the Arctic's harsh conditions led to numerous tragedies.

The Arctic began to be seen as an attractive part of the world as early as the 330s BC, with the Greek explorer Pytheas venturing north from Britain. However, it

wasn't until the late 1500s that the search for the Northwest Passage, a direct route from Europe to Asia through the Arctic, intensified. Among the first people conducting expeditions to the Arctic was an Italian explorer, Cabot, who believed he could find a shortcut to Asia from Europe by sailing west. Although he didn't find the Northwest Passage, he did discover parts of North America. Another initial explorer of the Arctic was English explorer Martin Frobisher, who undertook three major expeditions between 1576 and 1578. On his initial voyage, he believed he had discovered gold on Baffin Island, leading to heightened interest in subsequent expeditions. However, the supposed gold later turned out to be pyrite. Frobisher's journeys were significant for their early exploration of the Arctic region and for establishing England's claim to parts of modern-day Canada.

The 1800s saw a surge in Arctic exploration, driven by scientific curiosity, national pride, and the ever-beckoning call of the unknown. The Franklin Expedition, led by Sir John Franklin in 1845, is one of the most enduring mysteries of Arctic exploration. Tasked with discovering the elusive Northwest Passage, Franklin and his crew of 128 men aboard the HMS Erebus and the HMS Terror, which both vanished without a trace. The disappearance, as well as the reward offered for the expedition's recovery, sparked one of the largest search operations in history. Numerous expeditions were launched to uncover their fate, but it was not until the 21st century that significant clues emerged. In 2014 and 2016, the wrecks of the Erebus and Terror were respectively located, offering some answers but leaving many questions about the crew's final days. Two other individuals who contributed immensely to Arctic exploration in the 20th century were Robert Peary and Matthew Henson. In the early 20th century, the duo embarked on multiple expeditions to the Arctic as they claimed reaching the North Pole in 1909. Peary, an American naval officer, led the expedition, while Henson, an African American explorer, played a crucial role as his right-hand man. Henson's skills, acquired from years of polar experience and his rapport with the Inuit, were crucial to the expedition's success. While Peary received much of the fame, Henson's contributions have since been recognized, making him one of the first African Americans to be celebrated for his achievements in Arctic exploration.

Today, expeditions to the Arctic have become much easier thanks to technology. Modern navigation tools such as GPS have increased accuracy and safety. Satellite imagery provides perspectives from above the Earth of ice patterns and potential routes. Drones and underwater autonomous vehicles have also been employed to study areas previously unreachable by humans. Advanced clothing and shelter technology have also allowed explorers and scientists to withstand the Arctic's extreme temperatures for extended periods. Modern Arctic expeditions have shifted the focus from mere exploration to understanding the Arctic's ecological, geological, and climatic significance.

Below are some of the most famous expeditions to the Arctic:

**Trans-Arctic Air Expeditions (1958):** The first successful flight over the North Pole conducted by the U.S. Air Force was in 1958. However, the first successful flight by other explorers over the Arctic was achieved in 1926.

**The Icebreaker 'Arktika' (1977):** This Soviet vessel became the first surface ship to reach the North Pole.

**CATS (Circumpolar Active Layer Monitoring) Program (1990s):** An international initiative to monitor the active layer and permafrost in polar regions was started in the '90s, providing valuable data on climate change impacts.

**The Arctic Coring Expedition (2004):** An international initiative in 2004 successfully retrieved seafloor sediment cores from the Lomonosov Ridge in the central Arctic Ocean. These cores provide a climate record spanning 56 million years.

**The Tara Expeditions (2006-2008):** A French initiative where the schooner Tara drifted with the Arctic ice for over a year, collecting valuable data on the Arctic ecosystem and the impact of climate change.



**MOSAiC Expedition (2019-2020):** The largest Arctic expedition in history, led by the German research icebreaker Polarstern, embarked in 2019. The ship and its crew spent a year drifting through the Arctic Ocean, locked in ice, to study the Arctic climate system.

These initiatives underscore the global interest in the Arctic, not just as a frontier for exploration, but also as a critical region for understanding global climate patterns and ecological systems.

Despite these expeditions being some of the most recognized globally, they still come with their flaws. For example, trips made to the Arctic via a vessel such as with the 1977 expedition could lead to fuel leaks, harming the environment. Additionally, managing large projects like the MOSAiC expedition could have logistic challenges. The management of all the financial and humanitarian needs of such projects are all issues which must be addressed with innovative solutions.

As for the history of conflicts within the region, eight contemporary Arctic states have been established as a result of religious conflict and colonial violence in the region: Canada, the United States, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. The basis of contemporary Arctic relations was impacted by early interstate conflicts between Arctic nations, such as those between Norway and Sweden and Canada and the US. Managing natural resources like fish and seal stocks was a factor in some of the first interstate disputes. With Germany depending on Sweden for more than half of its iron ore and Norway for the transportation of Swedish minerals to Germany, Arctic resources remained crucial to national strategies well into the 20th century. During World War II, Greenland was strategically important in supplying forces with information, increasing the importance of the Arctic during the period.

### **3.1.3 Current Political Situation in the Arctic**

The Arctic belongs to eight countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, USA, Canada, Russia and Iceland. Although all of these countries are competing for the

natural resources of the Arctic; the United States, Russia and China are the ones in the toughest race. Although China does not have territory in the Arctic, according to the statement of observer countries, China is “overwhelmingly the most active”. The country has also been investing in Russia’s Arctic land and military, especially in that area. Speaking of Russia, the country has been known for increasing military activity in the Arctic, such as; adapted force projection, infrastructure development, the use of sub-threshold activities and gray zone operations. With Finland and Sweden’s access to NATO which are also Arctic countries, NATO’s tensions with Russia around the Arctic Zone has escalated. While mentioning Russia’s and China’s desire upon the Arctic, the United States of America is also involved. The State Alaska, makes the United States a part of the Arctic zone. Although the country is not taking as fast actions as Russia, the United States is investing upon climate action, Indigenous involvement, sustainable development and increasing the capabilities to prevent threats to the U.S. and their allies. In 2023, it was advocated to Congress the urgent need for a focused Arctic Strategy, enhanced domain awareness, and the creation of a comprehensive defense framework as climate change and security challenges were rising. The United States has stated that their vision for the Arctic is to make it a “peaceful, stable zone” and that they will “deter threats to the U.S. homeland and their allies by enhancing the capabilities required to defend their interests in the Arctic.”

While noting these countries who are competing harshly for the area, it is also important to note down other Arctic countries actions. For example, Denmark, an Arctic Country, has stated that they will be investing 14.6 billion kroner into the security of the Arctic, cooperating with Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Denmark’s Prime Minister has also stated that they will not be giving up Greenland to the United States during their visit to the Arctic, as a reply to Trump’s repeated speeches upon wanting to acquire Greenland. Apart from Denmark, Finland is also active in the Arctic. The country has adopted their new Arctic Policy in June 2021, which strongly focuses on climate change mitigation, adaptation and inhabitants. Nordic European Countries such as Norway, Iceland and Sweden are also focusing on adaptation and Indigenous , apart from pollution and climate change. Apart from these countries, Canada has also been taking action. The country has adopted a new strategy to counter

what it believes are threats from other nations. In December 2024, Canada revealed a new security policy; which aims to enhance its military and diplomatic presence in the Arctic, quoting rising threats from Russian and Chinese activity. The nation has also highlighted the potential risks of Russian weapons testing and deployment of missile systems in the Arctic. The country's new policy includes establishing consulates in Anchorage, Alaska, and Nuuk, Greenland and designating an ambassador to lead and coordinate Canada's policies and actions in the region. To summarize, all the Arctic countries are taking actions in the Arctic.

## **4. Main Conflicts in the Arctic**

### **4.1 The Indigenous People of the Arctic and Their Concerns**

As known, the word “Indigenous” means naturally originating naturally in a particular place. The Indigenous people of the Arctic have been living in the Arctic for years, and they are widespread, they occupy coastlines from Arctic Russia to Greenland to Canada, and they represent around 10 percent of the Arctic's total population. As mentioned in **3.1.1.4** of the guide, the Indigenous people come from different origins.

*Figure 10: An Indigenous community*



These people have been living in the land of the Arctic for years, with the oldest Indigenous community originating around since 2500 BCE.

While these people have been inheriting these lands for so long, they do not have official territories and live under other countries such as Greenland. This causes a problem; which is the dissatisfaction of Indigenous people if the country which they live under makes a decision that affects their lands. For example, In the Russian territory of the Arctic, the Nenets people have found migratory routes disturbed by oil and gas infrastructure. Similarly, the Swedish territory of Sapmi (the Sami homeland), is home to the largest underground iron ore mine in the globe. With the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war, these communities started facing more conflicts. They have been recruited for war and experienced a pause from the “Arctic Council”, in which they had fought for recognition and representation.

The Arctic Council is an international organization for countries to collaborate and work upon the Arctic’s issues. It had been proceeding until 2022, when its actions were paused. Indigenous people were also affected by this, in which the borders were closed and their families and lands were separated once more. As the Arctic Council’s network of cooperation weakens day by day, the Sami people’s concerns are brushed aside by governments.

The issue that needs to be considered is that these Indigenous people, such as the Sami, have their own lands, hunting grounds, state systems and internal borders that include more than one countries’ land in the Arctic. So when conflicts or disagreements happen between countries, such as the Cold War, they are the ones who have to find out a way to live when those countries close their borders for them. Their families are separated, lands are profited off, and they do not have much of a say in all of these events. Furthermore, apart from political and territorial conflicts, Indigenous people are also affected by Global Warming. Global Warming’s effects on the Arctic will be explained in **4.2** of the guide, so this part will only go over its effects on the Indigenous people. As a result of Global Warming, the Arctic's Sea Ice melts and this affects Indigenous people’s hunting and travel routes, which have been the same for thousands of years and passed on from generation to generation.



*Figure 11: Inuit men hunting in traditional dress, Nunavut, Canada*

Apart from the Arctic's Sea Ice, there is also the defrosting of permafrost. Permafrost is a ground that remains completely frozen for at least two years. It contains a mixture of organic material, plants and dead animals that have been frozen since the last ice age. It is most common in Earth's higher latitudes such as near the North and South poles. 19 million square kilometres of land in the north hemisphere are influenced by permafrost. A great amount of this land is in the Arctic. As the temperatures increase, the Permafrost of the Arctic defrosts, releasing methane and carbon dioxide which contributes to further global warming.

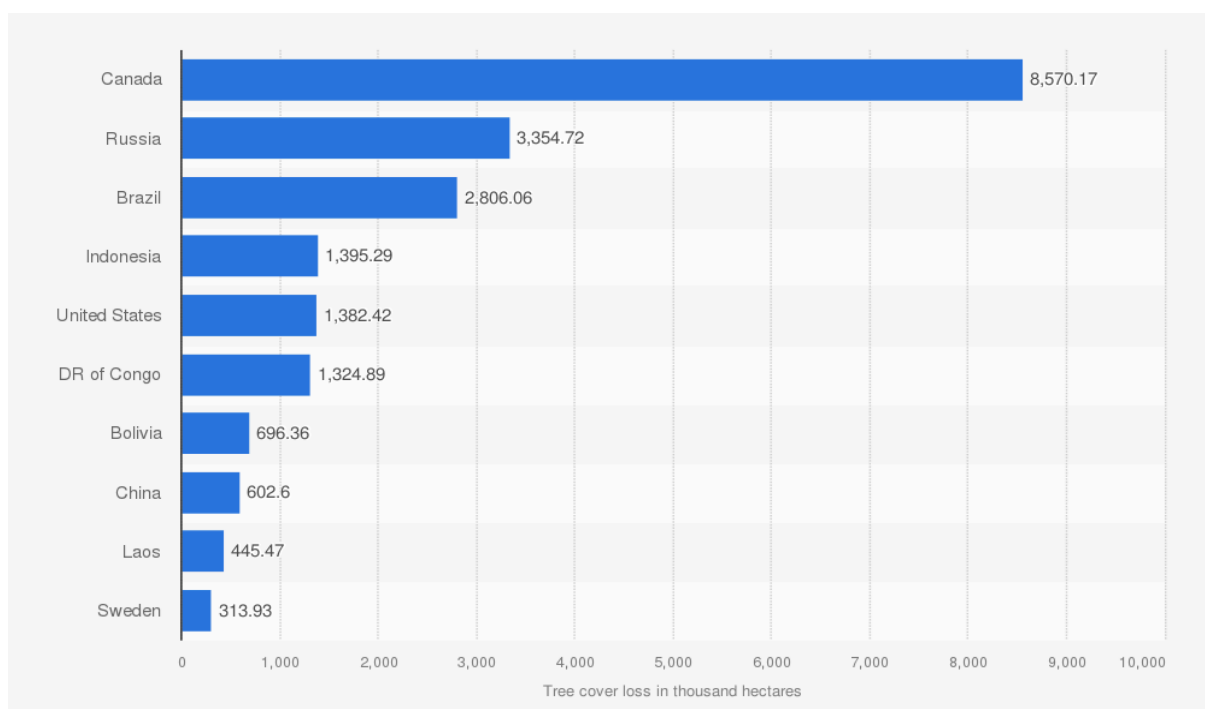
#### **4.2 Global Warming and Impact of Global Warming on the Arctic**

Global warming can be defined as the increase in the average air temperatures near the surface of Earth over the past two centuries. Since the mid-20th century, climate scientists have made detailed observations of various aspects of the weather, such as the average temperatures, precipitation and storms, as well as related influences on climate such as ocean currents and the atmosphere. All of these observations made by scientists reflect that the Earth's climate has changed over almost every conceivable time scale since the beginning of geologic time and that human activities since at least the beginning of the Industrial Revolution have a growing influence over the pace of climate change.

Climate change has a vast number of causes, a very large number of which are shaped due to human activities. Among these causes is the process of generating electricity and power. Generating electricity and heat by burning fossil fuels is one of the leading factors in global emissions, which are the gas emissions which lay the foundation for climate change. Most electricity used today is still generated by burning coal, oil, or gas, which produces carbon dioxide. This is a greenhouse gas that blankets the Earth and traps the rays of heat coming from the sun. Globally, just a little bit more than a quarter of electricity comes from wind, solar and other renewable sources, emitting very little. Because of the lack of usage of renewable sources, many other aspects, such as powering buildings, manufacturing goods, and using private transportation methods, cause a large amount of emissions. Cutting down forests to create farms, pastures, or for other reasons is also a leading cause of global warming. The demolition of forests causes emissions since cut trees release the carbon they have been storing. Apart from this, the amount of trees capable of turning carbon dioxide into oxygen also decreases, increasing the speed and effects of global warming. Each year, approximately 12 million hectares of forest are destroyed. Deforestation is therefore responsible for roughly a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions. Deforestation remains a large issue in NATO countries as well. Among NATO member states, Canada and the United States have lost the largest amount of forests. This is likely due to the fact that these two member states contain the largest amount of land as forests, so it is normal for these two to be losing the most land. Additionally, both countries regularly experience forest fires, which result in them losing their land dedicated to forests. As a percentage of its total land designated to forests, Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Hungary have lost the most land dedicated to forests. The reasons for forest loss across NATO member states vary. Natural disturbances such as wildfires are the primary source of loss in Canada, the United States and Türkiye. The scale of these disturbances is immense in countries with vast forest areas. Canada was particularly vulnerable in 2023, experiencing one of its worst forest fires on record. Climate change appears to be exacerbating the frequency of these natural events and contributing to even larger forest fires. Logging is the main source of deforestation in the Nordic countries of NATO, Sweden and Finland. The

volume of harvesting taking place within these countries equates to substantial annual losses. In general, the North American NATO members of the United States and Canada experience large-scale natural disturbances, Northern Europe faces losses due to forestry and Central Europe, as well as the Mediterranean region, grapples with climate change-related pest issues and wildfire vulnerability. The diverse reasons for climate change among NATO members underscore the complex challenges NATO faces in addressing deforestation.

*Table 1: Leading countries in annual tree cover loss worldwide in 2023 (in 1000 hectares)*



Finally, wealth inequality and overconsumption also contribute a vast amount to global warming. Buildings and their usages of power, how citizens and goods are transported, the products consumed by large populations, and the amount of waste being produced all contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. A large chunk of global greenhouse gas emissions is linked to private households and vehicle ownership, and the lifestyles of the wealthy in developed countries have a profound impact on our planet. The richest 1 percent of the global population combined account for more greenhouse gas emissions than the poorest 50 per cent.

As for the specific effects of global warming on the Arctic, scientists have concluded that the Arctic is expected to experience the most dramatic changes, undergoing more rapid warming than any other biome on Earth. This is because the Arctic is perceived as being relatively constant over time, with little resistance to changes in climate. The Arctic ecosystem has a year-round low temperature and permafrost, which is land that is completely frozen for the duration of at least two years. Due to this, enormous amounts of carbon have frozen in the soil of the Arctic or have been buried in organic sources. Scientists believe that these layers of organic sources carry the potential to source major emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>). If the permafrost covering the arctic melts, these organic sources will break down quicker, resulting in dramatic increases in emissions of carbon dioxide and methane from the Arctic. This is one example of a so-called “positive feedback effect” where a warmer climate leads to increased emissions of greenhouse gases, further reinforcing the greenhouse effect. To better understand the effects of global warming, we can inspect the effects of global warming on Arctic vegetation, animal life, and the Arctic seas.

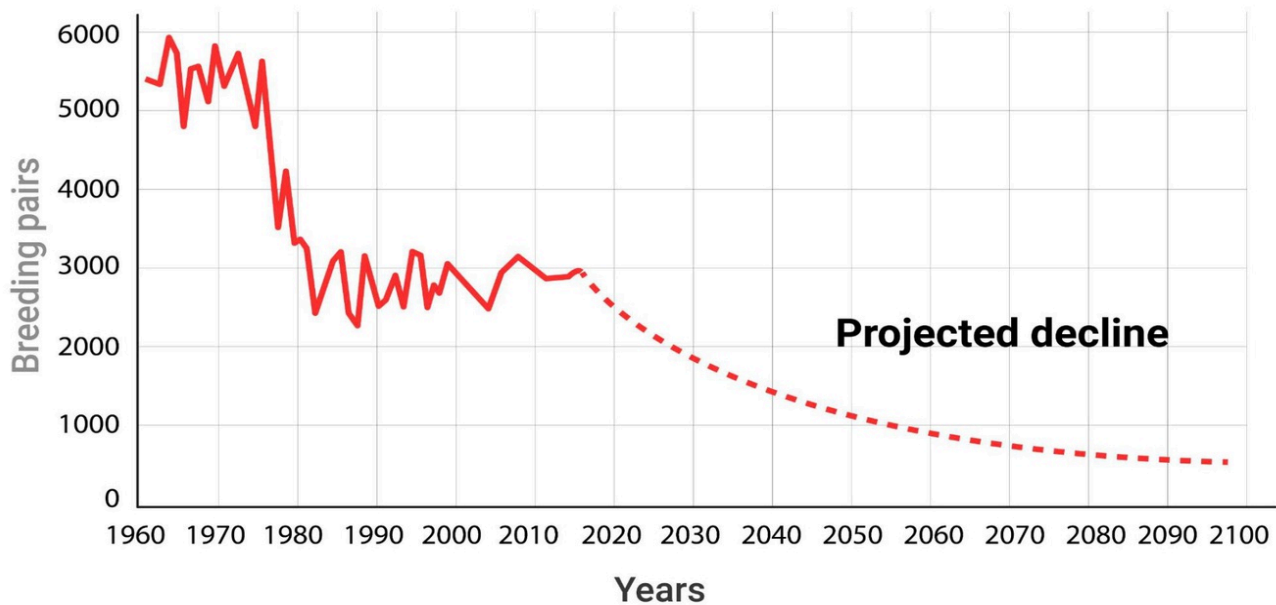
The majority of plant species that form arctic vegetation are very different from most vegetation in other regions of the planet because these species can carry out their livelihood just above or below 0°C. These plants have existed in the current permafrost layers of the Arctic for years and have therefore adapted to live in the permafrost environment. Additionally, access to nutrients within the Arctic region is scarce as temperatures are low and the soil is thin. Arctic plant species have adapted their access to nutrients and their growth to this thin but relatively constant soil. However, climate change can alter these and several other environmental factors to which these plant species have become adapted. An extended growth season, earlier snow-melting, altered precipitation patterns, deeper layers of soil and increased mineralisation and decomposition rates will all affect the development of these plants in a way that is currently uncertain. As the Arctic climate warms, it is projected that the tree line where plants can grow will move north, suppressing the vegetation growing there. Furthermore, the composition of these plant communities will also change, so basically, the location of these plants within the region will have to change.



This could affect the animal species that are dependent on the plants that are disappearing, in favour of more southern species.

As for the effect of animal life within the Arctic on plants, one important aspect which has to be considered is pollination. Insect pollination is one of the results of evolution and long-term coexistence between insects and plants, which is very strong. Despite this, it is a matter which is particularly vulnerable to climate change. A warmer climate than usual may lead to earlier flowering. Early-flowering tundra plants, so plants of the Arctic region, form a group that would be particularly vulnerable to changes in climate. At the same time, foreign species of insects coming from the south with the increase in temperature could harm the living conditions of the insect species that have adapted to the current Arctic region climate. Arctic mammals consist of predators and plant-eaters. For herbivores like reindeer, musk oxen, arctic hares and lemmings, the consequences of climate change on plants would mean that their access to food would not be certain and secure. The situation for predators such as arctic foxes, wolverines and wolves is dependent on access to herbivores, so if the growth of plants becomes inconsistent, both herbivores and carnivores will be negatively impacted. Arctic foxes are particularly dependent on lemming populations, and there are signs that lemmings are becoming less frequent due to climate change. On the other hand, polar bears are dependent on the sea ice to hunt seals. The massive reduction in the extent of arctic sea ice coverage due to warming temperatures will limit access to seals and could rapidly result in polar bears experiencing survival problems. It is difficult to predict what will happen to birds, as earlier snow-melting and increased summer temperatures will be beneficial for nesting of birds, while an increase in cloud formation and greater precipitation will have a negative impact. Birds living in the Arctic are mostly migratory, meaning they migrate depending on the seasons. The most serious consequences for migratory birds will probably depend on climate change in places outside the Arctic. Additionally, the decline in sea ice also affects penguins. Though penguins live in Antarctica, a region different from the Arctic, it is still important to acknowledge the decline in population that penguins are facing.

*Table 2: The decline in penguins which are breeding over time*



As for the Arctic seas, climate change would increase sea temperatures, a factor that is extremely important for the survival, birth and distribution of young fish. Scientists speculate that several species could migrate northwards if current trends in climate change continue, but it is not certain that they would be able to adapt to new areas. Additionally, the sea has a tremendous ability to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, which results in a reduction in the pH of the sea, making it more acidic. Ocean acidification has a detrimental effect on organisms within the seas, such as coral reefs and crustaceans. Climate change affects seals as the ice cover becomes increasingly reduced during the summer. Several seal species use the ice during their breeding season and when moulting. As ice melts, their habitat will become considerably reduced. Attempts during recent years to chart environmental toxins have revealed high levels of toxicity in arctic sea mammals. These toxins are transferred from small animals to fish and then onwards to sea mammals and seabirds. Environmental toxins affect the reproductive abilities of animals. Recent research shows that climate change can potentially alter the transport of pollution to polar areas and exert an even greater burden in the form of environmental toxins on the arctic ecosystem. As climate change warms arctic waters, higher temperatures can increase the uptake of toxins in marine organisms.

Although NATO was a result of the Cold War to ally against future threats, the relationship between NATO member countries has evolved to face climate change. For instance, NATO has established their own Climate Change and Security Agenda as of March 2021, embodying multiple climate-related goals such as showing increased awareness amongst NATO members on how climate change impacts security, advocating for climate adaptation, reducing emissions created by their military, and creating a broader network to tackle climate security. This was developed with the incentive for NATO to become a leading organization on how climate change impacts security. Additionally, NATO holds annual Climate Change and Security Impact Assessments, which act in a similar manner where NATO analyzes how its assets, missions, and operations are impacted by climate change. NATO makes use of science and technology, a part of its vast network, to support its climate change research. Developing defense mechanisms in line with the climate crises, building resilience, valuing innovation, and curating disaster response programs in the event they are necessary are all other works done by NATO.

Below, NATO's efforts to combat climate change are listed:

- “Developed a NATO map to analyze their impact on greenhouse gas emissions and encourage emission reductions amongst NATO members
- Enforced the importance of energy efficiency and green technologies
- Collaborated with the EU and the UN to develop a global network to address climate change
- Committed to including all climate change mitigation measures at the 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid
- Supported the NATO Centre of Excellence for Climate Change and Security in Montreal
- Shared three reports following the NATO Summit in Vilnius – including the 2023 Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment, the Compendium of Best Practices, and the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mapping and Analytical Methodology” (*Safdie*)

### **4.3 Excessive Resource Extraction**

Another crucial issue faced in the Arctic is the excessive extraction of resources, also referred to as “extractivism”. The fossil fuel projects across the Arctic region—in Russia, Norway and Alaska are examples of excessive extraction of fossil fuels from the Arctic. Once extracted, hydrocarbons are exported to other parts of the world, where they contribute to the increase of carbon emissions and speed up the climate crisis. This increase in interest in the Arctic’s fossil fuel production is completely against the Paris Agreement to hold global warming to 1.5°C or less. By 2030, the volume of fossil fuels produced in the Arctic will be double the amount that is consistent with that goal and by 2050, it may reach 700 percent of the amount consistent with the goal.

When it comes to oil, the mass-scale removal projects of it pollute rivers, marine coastal environments, landscapes and the air. An oil spill in the Arctic would devastate ecosystems and Indigenous societies living in the region. The impacts could be irreversible, wiping out wildlife populations and destroying traditional food systems.

Marine mammals are among the worst affected by Arctic extractivism as they suffer from underwater noise caused by growing shipping traffic as the sea ice melts and makes shipping routes easier to navigate. In fact, the fossil fuel, mining, and shipping industries are the biggest drivers and beneficiaries of ice melt in the Arctic. Since economic endeavours will be increased in the Arctic region in the coming years, it is important to balance industry and natural environments. The Arctic economy must foster investments in human capital, renewable energy and the sustainable blue economy and apply ecosystem-based management.

### **4.4 Security Concerns**

Over the past 5-10 years, the Arctic has been facing severe issues regarding security in the region and the question of whether the Arctic is an arena for military competition still exists. For the past 3 decades, the Arctic has been viewed as an area of ‘high north, low tension’. Mikhail Gorbachev’s, or the last president of the Soviet Union’s, speech in Murmansk in 1987 called for peacebuilding measures to lessen

strategic tensions in the Arctic. Therefore, the Arctic Council was established, at the time deciding to leave security affairs off its agenda in the organization's founding document.

However, this situation of the Arctic being a “low-conflict” region has shifted due to two major factors. The first is the conflict between great powers, especially between Russia and the United States, expanding into the Arctic as both countries recognize the region is more central to their strategic interests. The second is the rapid attention towards the Arctic by non-Arctic states, especially as the region boasts economic activity. While China may be leading this process, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and several European states such as France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Union as a whole, are all concerned about what is to come in the Arctic. As a result, the Arctic has been facing increased security risks.

‘Security’ in the Arctic has traditionally been discussed within non-military frameworks. The most pressing issue in terms of security has been the region's susceptibility to climate change, including the erosion of polar ice and altered weather conditions. The 2018 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change pointed specifically to the Arctic being the most affected region, and many discussions about Arctic development have used climate change as a focal point. Other economic and environmental security issues have appeared on the Arctic agenda in recent years as the region becomes more accessible to shipping and extractive industries, including fossil fuels, mining and fishing.

As sea routes which were previously blocked by ice in the Arctic Ocean become ice-free due to global warming for longer periods, maritime security concerns, including search and rescue, incidents at sea, and codes of conduct for regional transit, are at the front lines. Among these has been the 2017 Polar Code, which seeks to regulate civilian ship transit both in the Arctic and in the waters off Antarctica. Addressing the concerns about overfishing in the region as more open water becomes reachable, a fishing ban in the Central Arctic Ocean commenced in October 2018 with the support of the European Union, Russia and the United States as well as Canada, China, Iceland, Japan, Norway and South Korea.

Drilling projects for fossil fuels have been spearheaded by Russia, including the Yamal liquefied natural gas (LNG) initiative, supported by Chinese interests, as well as emerging spinoff enterprises. Over the past decade, many warnings have been raised about an 'Arctic scramble', as numerous countries sought to enter the region in search of more easily obtainable resources, making security concerns grow.

The Arctic Ocean has faced disagreements over maritime boundaries, leading to speculation about economic and political sovereignty. The 2007 incident, where a Russian flag was placed under the ice near the North Pole, sparked this speculation. However, many similar disputes have been resolved or are still being negotiated. For example, a maritime border dispute between Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea was resolved in 2010. The North Pole's claim to the underwater Lomonosov Ridge is also a complex issue.

Apart from economic concerns in the Arctic, the reintroduction of military concerns in the Arctic has occurred gradually, with Russia under President Vladimir Putin focusing on developing the region to boost its economy. Russia is optimistic about the potential of Siberia and the Russian Far East to boost the country's economy through energy projects, the opening of the Northern Sea Route for faster maritime shipping, and the development of ports and infrastructure for Arctic sea trade. Russia is also seeking to protect Arctic assets, which has caught the attention of the United States and its northern European allies. Previously abandoned Cold War-era military installations have been reopened, and Russian aircraft and submarines have become more frequent in Arctic spaces. The United States and NATO Allies have responded to these activities by improving the US Navy's Second Fleet, renovating facilities in Keflavik, Iceland, and constructing new icebreakers. Russia currently has over forty functioning icebreakers, including nuclear-powered ships, with the latest nuclear-powered vessel, the Ural, formally launched in St Petersburg. On the other hand, the United States has begun to view the Arctic through a military lens, adding to the emergence of hard security concerns in the region. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's speech at the Arctic Council's Ministerial meeting in Finland highlighted other Arctic actors as military threats and suggested that Russian claims to the Northern Sea Route and Canadian sovereignty over the Northwest Passage were not

legitimate. Pompeo also singled out Russia, Canada, and China for criticism for expanding its Arctic interests over the past decade. He suggested that China was seeking to develop strategies similar to those in place regarding the South China Sea, despite the two cases having dramatically different political and legal frameworks. American government statements in 2019 aimed to paint China as an Arctic spoiler, suggesting that China's scientific interests may lead to overt Arctic military strategies, including submarine deployments. The US and Denmark have also been anxious about China's expanding economic interests in Greenland, including mining and potential infrastructure investment. Attempting to leverage China out of the Arctic may be brought up, as it has already established strong ties with other Arctic states, including Russia, and is now in a position to affect much emerging Arctic policy given its size and economic strength. An Arctic Circle forum in Shanghai highlighted Chinese Arctic achievements in research and investments, including as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Russia and the US are intensifying their Arctic strategies, with the Putin government introducing rules for foreign vessels using the Northern Sea Route in 2019. These rules, including mandatory 45-day notifications and information transfer to Russian authorities, have been criticized by American officials. The US is aiming for freedom of navigation operations in the Arctic this summer, despite logistical challenges and potential opposition from Canada and Russia. The US Department of Defense has released an updated Arctic strategy report, highlighting the challenges China and Russia pose to security in the region, including concerns about Beijing's potential influence on Arctic governance. The US is advised to increase awareness of Arctic challenges, enhance operations, conduct exercises and cold-weather training, and strengthen the Arctic's rules-based order. The Arctic is now facing a potential "revenge of Realpolitik" in regional security, as the strategic concerns of major Arctic players, Russia and the US, and non-Arctic states like China are entering the region more regularly.

#### **4.5 Territorial Disputes and Claims**

The Arctic consists of eight countries; Canada, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, Russia, the United States of America and Greenland. As mentioned

previously in the guide, all of these countries have their own borders in the region. There are two areas in the region with special status; Svalbard and Nunavut. The Svalbard area is administered by Norway, while Nunavut is an autonomous territory inhabited by Canada's Inuit people. Keep in mind that although autonomous territories are semi-independent, they are still under another nation. When it comes to the Arctic's seas, only 6 countries border the Arctic's seas. Those countries are; Canada, The United States of America, Russia, Iceland, Norway and Denmark (Greenland).



*Figure 12: Southeast Greenland*

The Arctic's waters include some zones. These are called Territorial Sea, Exclusive Economic Zones, International Waters, Internal Waters and Contiguous Zones.

The explanation of these terms are as the following;

**Territorial Sea:** A zone of water where a country has full control over all the resources it provides such as; airspace, seabed, and subsoil. It extends seaward up to 12 nautical miles from the coastline of a country.

**Exclusive Economic Zones:** A zone of ocean which usually extends 200 nautical miles beyond a nation's territorial sea. The nation has full jurisdiction over the zone's resources. It was adopted through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, mentioned in **5.1** of the guide.



**International Waters:** The zones of water that are not under jurisdiction of any single state. They provide a neutral space for transfers and transactions under internationally recognized maritime laws.

**Internal Waters:** They are usually defined as the waters inside the inner limit of the territorial sea. Internal waters can exist without a territorial sea, and vice versa. Thus, internal waters include littoral areas such as ports, rivers, channels, bays, lakes, and other marine spaces landward of the baseline. Countries have the same sovereign jurisdiction over these waters and its resources as they do over other territories.

**Contiguous Zones:** Countries may establish contiguous zones from the outer edge of the territorial seas to a maximum of 24 nautical miles from the baseline. The main reason for the existence of these zones is the desire of a state to strengthen its law enforcement capacity and prevent criminals from entering the territorial sea. The main point when it comes to the State's right to contiguous zones is that; unlike the territorial sea, the contiguous zone only gives jurisdiction to a State on the ocean's surface and floor. It does not provide air and space rights.

The Arctic Region consists of many diverse zones of waters and nations which is one of the reasons why it attracts so much attention. While the majority of these lands and waters belong to a state, there are still ones that do not belong to any state. This potentially creates an environment of competition for nations to own that region. This action of nations is mentioned in **3.1.2** and **3.1.3** of the guide.

#### **4.6 Shipping Routes and their Potential dangers**

Despite the negatives of global climate change, it is offering new opportunities for international transportation networks. If current trends of global warming continue, parts of the Arctic could be used more reliably for navigation, at least during summer months and for longer periods. The main trans-Arctic routes include:

The Northern Sea Route (NSR) along the Arctic coast of Russia represents the highest commercial potential for maritime navigation, reducing a journey between East Asia and Western Europe from 21,000 km using the Suez Canal to 12,800 km. This route was used during the Soviet Era for military and resource extraction, but traffic dropped in the early 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 2009, two German ships, Beluga Fraternity and Beluga Foresight, completed the first commercial journey across the NSR. Other shipping lines have also run trials, but these did not show much commercial potential.

The Northwest Passage (NWP) crossing Canada's Arctic Ocean could reduce the maritime journey between East Asia and Western Europe by about 13,600 km using the NWP while taking 24,000 km using the Panama Canal, cutting transit time by about 10 days. In 2007, the Northwest Passage was open during the summer months for the first time in recorded history.

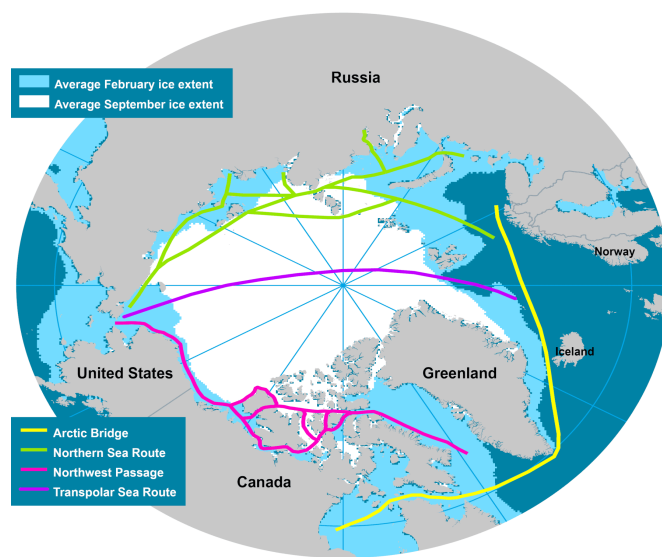
The Transpolar Sea Route (TSR) would use the central part of the Arctic to directly link the Strait of Bering and the Atlantic Ocean of Murmansk. This route is hypothetical as it involves ice-free conditions that have not yet been observed. The Arctic Bridge linking the Russian port of Murmansk or the Norwegian port of Narvik to the Canadian port of Churchill could be used, mostly for the grain trade.

The consideration of arctic routes for commercial navigation has been the subject of many unrealistic expectations. It remains a very speculative endeavour, mainly due to four reasons:

1. It is uncertain whether the receding perennial ice cover is a confirmed trend or simply part of a long-term climatic cycle.
2. There is very limited economic activity around the Arctic Circle, implying that shipping services crossing the Arctic have almost no opportunity to drop and pick up cargo as they pass through.
3. The Arctic remains a frontier in terms of weather forecasting, charting, and building a navigation system, implying uncertainties and unreliability for navigation around it.
4. The decrease in sea ice extent and its smaller volume are linked with the growing mobility of summer sea ice and more coastal erosion. Substantial efforts have to be

made to ensure that navigation can take place safely along well-defined and patrolled navigation routes.

The setting of rail corridors between China and Europe across Central Asia (the Eurasian landbridge, also known as the Belt and Road initiative) offers an option that is more stable and time-performing than the Arctic routes. However, maritime shipping companies are not yet seriously considering the commercial potential of the Arctic as a navigation shortcut.



*Figure 13: Map of Arctic Shipping Routes*

States have expressed interest in using these new shipping lanes for shorter transit times, strategic resource extraction, military activity, regional shipping, fishing, and tourism. However, the Arctic has many obstacles for socio-economic and maritime development, including unpredictable seas, severe climate conditions, high costs, and a lack of developed infrastructure in the northern territories.

This renewed regional interest may lead to increased geopolitical tensions, as increasing traffic brings unknown ships close to many of these countries' coasts in a way they are not familiar with. States must determine how to control their northern borders in harsh climates and territories that were once impassable. Without some kind of vigilance over their borders, Arctic states may also run the risk of facilitating or falling victim to increased transnational crime.

The development of the NSR and NWP presents possible issues. Unresolved disputes about the sovereignty of these new sea routes may be problematic when shipping does eventually become an option. China and Russia's cooperation on the development of the NSR also brings with it concerns about Chinese influence in the Arctic.

The Northern Sea Route (NSR) was first opened by the Soviet Union in the 1930s but has not been a reliable transit route for many decades due to ice coverage. With the increasing melting of the polar ice caps, the NSR is looking more and more like a potential transit route. However, there are geopolitical implications concerning the NSR that raise interesting questions. Russia has claimed that the NSR lies within its territorial waters, giving it exclusive rights to develop the area and to patrol ships. The United States and other powers have disputed this claim, leading to an interesting paradox where neither side can decide on who can control this passageway.

The Northwest Passage (NWP) also raises its own concerns, mirroring those of Russia. Canada claims that the NWP is located in internal Canadian waters and therefore any ship is subject to Canadian law and sovereignty. With the opening of the NWP, Canadian analysts have raised concerns about potential environmental disasters, military security, and the security of people. However, the question also comes down to sovereignty, as with the NSR.

Geopolitically, the opening of the NWP has similar implications as the NSR. While there is less development with other nations, international legal questions still remain unanswered about who has control over the strait. The second geopolitical concern is potential disasters and military security in the region.

Outside of just the shipping routes, the Arctic has witnessed the development of new hydrocarbon and military ports, and Russia has been the prime protagonist of this transformation. The militarization of the region has also been a cause of concern for many policymakers, and the United States is one of them in particular. Russia has

reopened over 50 Soviet bases in the region, providing strategic ports and sending signals to other countries. Opening such ports indicates Russia's desire to continue its traditional hegemony in the region.

The construction of these ports can be seen as the first phase of a geopolitical competition between great powers. Increased travel through the North Sea Route (NSR) and Northwest Passage (NWP) is linked with some geopolitical concerns. Firstly, there is no clue as to who exercises power over whom can travel and what limits they have to adhere to in an attempt to travel. Without such information, there will be increased uncertainty and room for misperception among states. Secondly, there is also an issue of transnational crime. As there is more traffic on these waterways, the Arctic states will have to come up with ways of monitoring unfamiliar vessels and activity, which can boost illegal fishing and trafficking.

Lastly, Russia-China relations are an issue. The development of the NSR launched the beginning of an eventual Russia-China union wherein China provides capital and technology for the development of the NSR and Russia provides access and future returns for China. From a NATO perspective, a Russia-China union is an issue because it increases Chinese access in the Arctic and brings two countries with tense relations with NATO together.

While geopolitical tensions can be under threat of increasing, there is still time to make preparations for geographic shifts up North. States should collaborate with other Arctic counterparts prior to making any choices, weighing all avenues for steering clear of geopolitical conflict.

## **5. Conventions done upon the Arctic**

### **5.1. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is an international treaty that has been signed by numerous member states of the United Nations in order to define the legal framework for the oceans and the seas by defining the rights and obligations of States Parties with respect to naval life.

The treaty was opened for signature on 10 December 1982 in Montego Bay, Jamaica after numerous negotiations upon the significance of the oceans and the seas and their resources. The original signatories included 119 countries, with them being all around the world.

The treaty entered force on November 16 1994, with 60 countries ratifying it.

The main points that need to be understood when it comes to this agreement is that the reason why this agreement was made in the first place. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was made in order to replace the old “freedom of the seas” concept. This concept was that; All waters beyond national boundaries were considered international waters and member states only had rights on water extending from their national coastlines (which was around 3 nautical miles). Fast forward to the 20th century, some countries demanded to extend their national claims. All of these drew a pathway to the UNCLOS.

The UNCLOS introduced new legal concepts , regimes and addressed new concerns upon all uses of oceans and their resources.

Another significant point is the wide acceptance of the convention. Although it is not universally accepted, The UNCLOS reflects customary international law to a significant extent. Currently, UNCLOS has almost achieved universality. As of July 2021 it has been ratified by 168 parties, which includes 167 States (164 United Nations member States plus the UN Observer State Palestine, as well as the Cook Islands and Niue) and the European Union.

However, there are member states of the United Nations that have not signed the convention. These member states consist of; Andorra, Eritrea, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, San Marino, South Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Venezuela.

The last point is the effects this convention had on the world. The most important part is that the UNCLOS defined naval zones, which have been detailed in **4.5** of the guide. Especially Article **2 & 3 & 4 & 15** and much more of the convention have focused on this. It is important to remember that defining these zones had a huge effect on global politics, and reduced the risk of conflict caused by the drive to divide said zones. The convention also permits, specifically part **VII** Article **86**, the freedom of international waters to all states. It also highlights the importance of stability and peace in the international waters, mentioned in Article **88** of part **VII**. The convention affirms that piracy is illegal under international maritime law and defines sovereign authority for archipelagic nations and for nations with continental shelves.

The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations serves as the secretariat of the UNCLOS. The Office provides knowledge, advice and guidance to countries. The office also gives them a clearer understanding of the Convention and the related agreements, their wider acceptance, uniform and consistent application and successful application.

Further information upon the contents of the convention shall be found in the official website of the United Nations.

## **5.2 The Svalbard Treaty**

The Svalbard Treaty, or as it's previous name the Spitsbergen Treaty is a document which includes key legislative framework regarding the recognition of Norway over the Archipelago of Svalbard. The reason behind the previous name of the treaty was due to the past name of Svalbard being Spitsbergen.

This treaty had been signed on February 9, 1920 and had entered into force in 1925.

Provisions said in the Treaty entirely accept Norway owning the territory of the Svalbard Archipelago. Norway holds full sovereignty on the judicial legislative and administrative autonomy of Svalbard. However, the zone should be demilitarized and be open for both civil and commercial use and let NATO Member States enjoy equal rights.

Speaking of demilitarization, Norway owns a broader role as a NATO Member and allows for defense coordination meanwhile complicating NATO Military activity upon the region making it increasingly worthy of engaging debate.

Moving forward all commercial and civil activities like mining, fishing and maritime industries are welcomed.

These activities are all allowed on the condition that these activities are sustainable and non-discriminative.

Keeping these key provisions in mind this treaty promotes stability, maritime security and positive for the environment while being considerate towards NATO Member States this Treaty is certainly of high importance.

### **5.3 The Polar Code**

The Polar Code (The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters) is another key international framework.

This framework had been officially adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and had entered into force on 1st of January, 2017.

Although this document is important for the flow of the committee, the Polar Code only applies to the vessels operating in polar waters (Arctic and Antarctic waters).

The document holds;



*Mandatory safety measures (I-A)*

*Recommendatory safety measures (I-B)*

*Mandatory and environmental safety measures (II-A)*

*Recommendatory environmental measures (II-B)*

It also houses enhanced ship design and construction standards specifically for handling cold temperatures, ice and limited infrastructure.

Considering the astonishing coverage of the area; it doesn't end right there.

Polar Code has requirements for crew training, prohibits the release of toxic matter into the seas and limits sewage and garbage discharge to protect the ecosystem set in the region.

However enforcement of these are entirely dependent on the flag of the ship under discussion creating certain uneven implementations and also smaller vessels such as yachts and fishing boats are not included which are up for debate.

#### **5.4 The Barents Sea Fisheries Agreement**

The Barents Sea Fisheries is a rather unique agreement between the NATO member state of Norway and Russia. Despite Russia's current extraordinary situation regarding Ukraine, Norway is still collaborating with Russia when it comes to this fishing agreement (though only when it comes to this fishing agreement). According to Norway's Minister of Fisheries and the Oceans, the agreement lays the foundation for long-term and sustainable marine management in the High North, and is crucial for Norway to be able to take care of the cod stock and the other species in the Barents Sea. The main objective of the Barents Sea Fisheries Agreement taking place is the management of fish stocks. The cod quota, so the share of cod within the sea, was at an all time low from 1991 to 2024, indicating how important it is to manage these sources properly.

The 2025 deal specifies a 25% drop in the Northeast Arctic cod, haddock, Greenland halibut, and capelin quota. Haddock's total quota will be 130,000 tonnes; Norway's share will be 163,436 tonnes. Of 19,000 tonnes of Greenland halibut, Norway will have 9,675. There will be no capelin fishing in 2025. Measures to protect small fish will be evaluated by researchers together with an examination of cod and haddock management rules and research approach. The parties commit to keep developing management policies for capelin, capelin, and Greenland halibut. Researchers have developed management guidelines for Barents Sea shrimp and will keep working until the next Fisheries Commission meeting. The agreement also includes technical regulations for fishing, control measures, and research cooperation. A bilateral working group between the Institute of Marine Research and Russian research institute VNIRO has prepared quota recommendations for 2025.

## **6. Questions to be Addressed**

1- In what ways NATO can support the reinforcement and implementations of already existing treaties, such as the The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, The Svalbard Treaty, The Polar Code and The Barents Sea Fisheries Agreement to promote stability in the region?

2-How shall NATO address ongoing endangerment of melting glaciers due to global warming and encourage Member States to accelerate actions regarding the issue?

3- Why is there an increasing number of countries investing in the security of the Arctic and what could this possibly mean to the future of the Arctic and NATO?

4- What are the primary factors accelerating the effects of global warming within the Arctic region and what could be done by NATO Member States to reduce the prevalence of these factors and their effects on the Arctic region?

5- Which economic sources may drive states to resort to exploitation and conflict within the Arctic region, and how can NATO contribute to the sustainable management of these sources?

6- How can NATO assure and ensure the minimization of risks created by conflicts between states towards Indigenous inhabitants?

7- What initiatives should NATO take to ensure the previous damages done to the Arctic region do not occur in future expeditions to the Arctic?

8- What initiatives NATO may take in order to reduce the environmental and political threats brought by newly established trade routes to the Arctic region?

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