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HARARE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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ZIMUN XI

The Cost of Innovation:

*Navigating the Ethical Responsibilities of Technological
Advancements and Societal Change for Inclusive, Sustainable
Development in a Globalised World*



Security Council

*Examining the risk of Arctic militarisation on International Peace and
Security*

Committee: Security Council

Issue: Examining the risk of Arctic militarisation on International Peace and Security

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INTRODUCTION

Examining the risk of Arctic militarisation on International Peace and Security calls for global attention. The Arctic was originally a peaceful and tranquil area but recently it has been seeing some rising militarization due to its resources access, strategic priorities and climate change. NATO, the United States, China and Russia have been expanding their military presence and security risks which results in a threat for global peace and regional stability.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- **Arctic Council:** “The Arctic Council is an intergovernmental forum that focuses on challenges affecting both Arctic nations and Indigenous communities in the region. It consists of eight member states that hold sovereignty over territories within the Arctic Circle: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. Additionally, other nations or groups may join as observer states, while organizations advocating for Indigenous peoples can gain status as permanent participants.”

- **UNCLOS:** “The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea establishes a legal framework for governing ocean use and resources, recognizing the interconnected nature of maritime issues. Opened for signature on 10 December 1982 in Montego Bay, Jamaica, it was the result of over 14 years of negotiations involving 150+ countries. The Convention integrates traditional maritime laws with new legal concepts and frameworks. It entered into force on 16 November 1994 and is now the globally recognized authority on ocean law. Comprising 320 articles and nine annexes, it covers areas such as maritime boundaries, environmental protection, economic activities, scientific research, and dispute resolution.”
- **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):** “A region of coastal waters and seabed close to a country's shoreline, over which the country asserts exclusive rights for activities like fishing, drilling, and other economic uses.”
- **Militarization:** “The process of deploying military forces and infrastructure to assert control over a region.”
- **Northern Sea Route (NSR):** “The Northern Sea Route (NSR) is the shortest shipping path connecting Western Eurasia to the Asia-Pacific region. It begins at the junction of the Barents and Kara Seas and ends at the Bering Strait.”

BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE

The Arctic used to be a distant and largely unreachable frontier. Now, it has become a

focal point of intense political rivalry. This shift is largely driven by climate change as it has caused the Arctic ice to melt at an alarming rate which opened up new shipping lanes and offered unprecedented access to a wealth of untapped natural resources such as natural gas, minerals and vast reserves of oil. As a result, nations, both those within the Arctic region and those far outside it, have begun to invest heavily in scientific research, military operations and infrastructure development in the Arctic, driven by strategic and economic interests.

In the 20th century, the Arctic was governed by a cooperative approach with nations prioritizing scientific collaborations and environmental protection having institutions like the Arctic Council that played a vital role in the promotion of dialogue and joint initiatives among the 8 Arctic states and indigenous communities. This framework allowed shared goals in the preservation of the Arctic environment, the management of resources in a sustainable way, and the conduction of research. However, in recent years, the cooperative spirit has been overshadowed by a rapidly changing political environment. The Arctic has transformed into a hotspot for military posturing and economic competition, as countries compete for influence over its resources and control of emerging routes.

CURRENT CONTEXT

As stated earlier, the Arctic is emerging as a political flashpoint as nations strengthen their military presence to secure strategic interests.

Russia has expanded its Arctic operations by reopening more than 50 Soviet-era bases,

reinforcing its Northern Fleet, and conducting extensive military exercises to assert control over key shipping lanes and resources. In response to this, NATO and the United States have ramped up their Arctic defenses, by increasing forces in Alaska, reactivating the Second Fleet and engaging in joint military drills with allies. The United States have deployed Fighter Jets and are set to invest more than 40 billion dollars in the Arctic security infrastructure. Meanwhile, China identifies as a “near-Arctic State”, has invested over 90 billion dollars in research, economic projects and infrastructures as part of its Belt Road Initiatives (BRI).

Territorial disputes in the Arctic are rising among Denmark, Russia and Canada due to its vast resources such as 13% undiscovered oil and 30% of untapped natural gas. While the UNCLOS provides legal guidelines, nations are boosting their military presence over the Northwest passage which could cut shipping distances by 40%. Once a region of scientific cooperation, the Arctic is now a contested space with its climate change accelerating competition for resources and strategic dominance, heightening the risk of conflict.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATION INVOLVED

- **NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization):** NATO has turned its attention to the Arctic due to security concerns over Russia’s military presence and China’s interests in establishing a footprint in the region. The alliance conducts regular military exercises such as Cold Response and Trident Juncture, aimed at ensuring readiness against potential threats.

- **Russia:** Russia is the dominant military power in the Arctic, and its influence in the region is rooted in both strategic and economic interests. Russia has been heavily invested in expanding its Arctic military infrastructures such as military bases, upgrading older Soviet-era installations and bolstering its icebreaker fleets. Russia has also been positioning itself to dominate the Northern Sea Route as a potential shortcut for maritime trade between Europe and Asia.
- **The United States:** The United States has had a significant interest in the Arctic especially in response to Russia's military activities and China's growing engagement in the region. The United States have focused on the deployment of additional troops, arctic military strategies and the resources in the Arctic. The United States has strengthened its ties within NATO especially with Nordic countries and Canada to make sure that the Arctic remains secure and that Russian and Chinese influence is countered.
- **Canada:** Canada is also modernizing its defense capabilities by supporting regional organizations like the Arctic Council, which fosters dialogue among Arctic nations on environmental protection, sustainable development and the rights of indigenous people. Canada has also enhanced its military presence and invested in infrastructure such as aircrafts and they have increased their participation in NATO-led Arctic exercises.

- China: China has emerged as a growing player in the region through its Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI). They have invested in the Arctic's infrastructures with shipping lanes being places and ports. China views the Arctic as an important region for securing access to resources such as rare earth minerals and oils but also using the Northern Sea Route for shipping.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

- 1996: Formation of the Arctic Council to promote cooperation
- 2007: Russian submarine plants a flag on the Arctic seabed.
- 2014-Now: Russia builds military bases and aims to strengthen Arctic defense.
- 2015: NATO conducts its largest Arctic military exercise in decades. ● 2019:

Russia deploys new missile systems in the Arctic

- 2020: The trump administration announces new Arctic security strategies
- 2021 NATO enhances its Arctic military strategies
- 2022-2023: Canada and The United States boosted their Arctic defense measures.

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