

Committee: Security Council

Agenda: Addressing the situation of Militarization of the Arctic

I. Committee Introduction

Established by the United Nations Charter on October 24, 1945, the United Nations Security Council maintains its authority under the organization through its entrustment of ensuring international peace and security. With the United Nations Headquarters in New York City as its permanent residence, the Council has travelled to various cities and has held sessions in places such as Ethiopia, Panama, and Switzerland. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) consists of 5 permanent member states and 10 non-permanent member states, making altogether an aggregate of 15 Members. The 5 permanent member states that are entitled with veto power are China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States of America. Veto power is the right to refuse a resolution or decision and prevent its enactment by casting a negative vote. It was specifically given to the five countries by the creators of the United Nations Charter to acknowledge the key role they played in the establishment of the United Nations and their continuing role of maintaining peace and security. The remaining 10 non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly every two years. Article 27 of the UN Charter states the requirements of the voting system as each member having one vote. The Decisions of the Council on procedural matters must be made by an affirmative vote of nine members, and all decisions on other matters must be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including those of the permanent nations.

The Security Council primarily upholds four principles: maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, cooperating in solving international problems and promoting respect for human rights, and being a center for harmonizing the actions of nations. It has the power to investigate any dispute that might lead to international friction and to call on Members to apply measures including economic sanctions and dissolutions of diplomatic relations to prevent aggression. Moreover, under Article 25 of the Charter, the Security Council is able to bestow compulsory characteristics upon its decisions. This differs from other organs, since while other organs of the United Nations can recommend and encourage actions to its Member States, the Security Council is the only one to have compulsory orders. Resolutions can further be adopted in order to establish peacekeeping operations, and to authorize deployment of troops. Such peacekeeping operations work under the basics of consent, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate. Additional functions that the Security Council executes are: recommending the appointment of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, electing the Judges of the International Courts of Justice, and implementing trusteeship functions in “strategic areas.”

II. Agenda Introduction

Located at the far north of the Earth, the Arctic consists of parts of Canada, Russia, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and the US. The area has a climate of long winter and a cool summer that makes it hard for people to live. In the past, it was difficult for people to access the Arctic and use the area effectively. However, recent changes, such as melting of glaciers due to global warming, have increased the accessibility of the area, thus contributing to the increase in Arctic's value.

The Arctic is regarded as an area that is both economically and strategically valuable. Economic values that the region holds is due to the diverse resources; the Arctic is known to be a repository of numerous resources, covering mineral resources, biological resources, and other renewable resources. About 13 percent of undiscovered oil and 30 percent of the gas is known to be stored in the Arctic. Furthermore, Iron ore, copper, nickel, zinc phosphates, and diamonds are mineral resources abounding in the region that attracts mining. Furthermore, strategic values include the values of the Arctic route; using the Arctic route as a seaway will shorten the distance of millions of miles and routes. Unprecedented usage of routes will also be developed. Then, the arctic will serve as a base to defend against attacks from other countries. So, Russia is working to develop natural resources of the Arctic and the routes to militarize the Arctic to use as a protection of the homeland.

Due to these values the Arctic holds, it has become an area that is not only highly desired but also highly disputed. Since the Arctic does not have an owner by international law, the conflict is nowhere near being solved.

Countries claim to own the Arctic on the basis of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, which is an international law that controls ocean and country's uses of resources by setting a framework of sea and ocean activities. In this context, countries have begun to assert the right to this territory to develop a military strategy for the war to control the new routes and expand the scope of the market and take advantage of the industrial revolution. Then, during World War II, the Arctic region became a strategic base for facilitating supplies between then-ally, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America.



Potential shipping routes through the Arctic

III. Definition of Key Terms

Militarization

Militarization is a process when a society becomes ready for war. In the case of Arctic militarization, this term means countries setting up militaries in the Arctic. In militarized areas, military weapons are ready for use, civilians and military forces are ready for war. Militarized areas act as a hub for military defense.

Arctic Council

The Arctic Council is formed to solve and facilitate cooperation on issues related to the Arctic. They especially focus on sustainable development, cooperation with Arctic locals. It was established in 1996, and the members are Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States. The council evaluates and discusses the situation in the Arctic for the environment and comprehensive issues of the Arctic. Also, it contributes in making a negotiation by opening a forum.

Internal waters

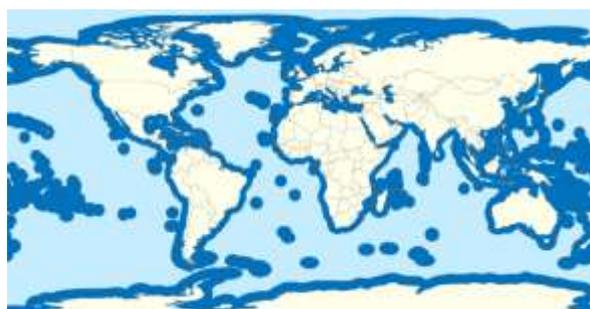
Internal waters is an area that is on the landward of the baseline side of territorial waters. Lakes and rivers are usually included in the realms of this area. The state has a right that is identical to the rights it has on its mainland in its internal waters, meaning that ships from other countries do not have the right to pass through this area without agreements with the state that owns the internal waters.

Territorial sea

Territorial sea is an area that extends 12 nautical miles (22km) from the baseline. Since the territorial sea of a country is the sea under the sovereignty of the country, the state that has ownership over the area can make laws, policies and use the resources of this area. A country may enforce domestic laws to maintain safety in the area, and can also punish foreign vessels if they violate the law.

EEZ

EEZ is a short word for Exclusive Economic Zone. It is an area that gives countries an exclusive right to explore and use marine resources out to 200 nautical miles. This concept was made at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.



The area marked in dark blue corresponds to the EEZ.

NATO

NATO stands for North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Formed in 1949 after World War II, the organization was established to promote security against the threat by the Soviet Union and it was developed to make the European Society peaceful. It started as 12 countries and expanded to encompass 30 member countries.

Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)

SCAR work focuses on scientific research on studying the nature of Antarctica. By its research, they provide scientific advice to meetings and organizations like Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings and UNFCCC which deal with issues about management of Antarctica.

IV. Past Actions

United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

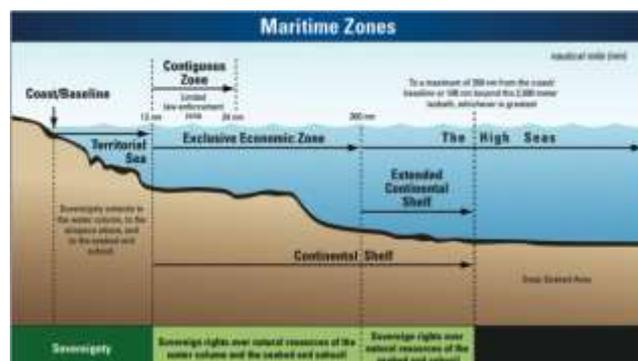
UNCLOS is an international law that controls the ocean and the usage of ocean related resources. It covers rights and duties on usage and conservation of natural resources, especially seas. It was signed in 1982 to replace the four Geneva Conventions of April, 1958. Before UNCLOS, some believed freedom in usage of seas but it became a problem as accumulated disruption of seas ruined the ocean environment. Now, 167 member countries and the EU are working for the conservation of the sea.

UNCLOS I

UNCLOS I was the first conference held in 1958. Four treaties were formed by this conference, which are Convention on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone, Convention on the Continental Shelf, Convention on the High Seas, and Convention on Fishing and Conservation of Living Resources of the High Seas.

UNCLOS III

After UNCLOS III, several treaties were made. Issues like EEZ, setting limits, protection of the marine environment and scientific research was discussed during the conference, leading to the setting of areas such as Internal waters, Territorial waters and Archipelagic waters.



Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement

The Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement is the first international agreement formed for the Arctic region with Arctic Council members. The agreement deals with search and rescue issues held in Arctic areas that might happen because of the poor climatic conditions. Countries need to take effective action and also inform institutions. This agreement is considered a way to strengthen cooperation between Arctic Council countries and ensure safety.



Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic

The Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic is made to prevent the contamination of arctic resources. It includes policies that countries should implement, such as the formation of national systems toward oil pollution, activity monitoring, and exchange of information on oil issues.

Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation

The Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation is formed to facilitate research and development in the Arctic region. The first focus of the agreement is to lower administrative barriers for scientists. Scientists experienced great challenges in conducting research in the Arctic because of the environmental constraints and the administrative process. Therefore, nations tried to lower these barriers so that countries are able to collaborate and overcome problems together. The next one is focused on research. It allows scientists to bring research materials and datas easily so that they can conduct research easily. The last focus is the improvement of the research environment. Efficient scientific research is being impaired due to restrictions on ship transport and restrictions on scientific research in EEZ.

Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)

AMAP is formed for countries to cooperate in issues about pollutants in the Arctic. The programme keeps track of trends of pollutants, key climate and environmental changes. This process is crucial, in that pollution and harms might influence people or organisms in the Arctic. It also reports to countries that they can form a solution toward this. In particular, as problems such as heavy metals, air pollutants, radioactivity, and microplastics have become serious recently, AMAP has been focusing on these issues lately.

International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)

IASC is an organization formed with an international science group who participates in arctic research. They work to make the Arctic a main role for scientific research on Earth. It also gives some scientific advice to the Arctic Council. It is separated into five working groups to increase efficiency of their projects.

The first group is the Atmosphere Working Group which is a group that responds to the Earth climate change and how the Arctic is reacting to this. Second, there is the Cryosphere Working Group. They discuss things like snow, ice or ocean that are factors that make the Arctic. Since the cryosphere is an important part of the Arctic, they also take care about issues regarding the cryosphere. Next, there is the Marine Working Group. They focus on the Arctic ocean and the seas, looking at the changes caused by climate changes and also discussing the relationship between the Arctic ecosystem and the biology of the Arctic. The next group is the Social and Human Working Group. They conduct research on social science different from other groups researching how people interact with the Arctic. The last one is the Terrestrial Working Group. They focus on land and freshwater areas in the Arctic. They take care of the overall Arctic system, comparing and contrasting past, present, and the future.

V. Position of key member nations and other bodies

Russia

The Arctic is considered an important area especially for Russia. The country requires a large amount of oil and gas that is needed for both its economy and the interests of Putin's inner circle. In order to secure these interests, the nation enlarged its seabed to Canada's and Greenland's exclusive economic zones officially. Thus, Russia is one of the countries that is rapidly militarizing the Arctic, building 475 new military sites and 16 new deep water ports in the region. Russia is currently trying to secure their military by making their own defense system, and is working to make the Arctic a place for the development of large-scale marine resources in the future. The last one is the Terrestrial Working Group.



United States

As a founding member of the Arctic Council, the United States is against the militarization of the Arctic. The country holds that Russia's action toward the Arctic, especially the regulation of ships passing the Northern Sea route, is against international law. In the United States Arctic Policy, the importance of national security, environment protection and cooperation with countries is stated. Since the US is the main country involved in Arctic issues, the Executive Agencies work for the Arctic policies. Agencies like Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), Office of Science & Technology Policy (OSTP), Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security discuss and work on Arctic issues.

Canada

Also a member of the Arctic Council, Canada has also implemented a number of policies for the preservation of the Arctic. The government of Canada has several visions regarding the Arctic. First, individuals in the Arctic should be able to live in healthy communities where they can manage themselves living their own life. Second, the land and the environment should be preserved in order to form a sustainable environment. The last vision is to protect the future of the Arctic through measures such as enhanced patrols. Furthermore, Canada emphasizes Arctic sovereignty, and has taken measures for this value. One of the measures taken was the construction of the Arctic military training facility and deep water ports. However, the construction fell short of expectations and was shown to be futile.

China

For the Arctic, China plans to use the resources as efficiently as possible. China conducts research, finds some useful natural resources and extends military abilities. They expressed their concern on Russia's attitude such as militarizing the Arctic. There was a statement of China that the arctic belongs to everyone in the world. Saying that China should take a main role in exploration of the Arctic since China has one-fifth of the world's population. They are involved in researches in mostly every part of the Arctic including Arctic geology, geography and biology. China also plans to build a Polar Silk Road which would become a trade route for ships to move around the country easily. They are trying to build a road through the Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road. It is considered beneficial because making an Arctic shipping route will shorten the distance of going from Shanghai to Hamburg as 4000 miles than the route through the Suez Canal. In particular, China believes that more routes will be opened in the future considering the current ice melting situation. In the case of the Netherlands, China expects 23% of shipping distance from China to the Netherlands will decrease if a new Arctic Route is made.

VI. Conclusion and Suggested Solutions

Currently, conflicts regarding the militarization of the Arctic are aggravating, and Russia's efforts for militarization have been continuing. Since the Arctic is a land valuable for its natural resources, nations should preserve the land and prevent it from further militarization.

As Canada's case showed, leaving this situation and providing a simple solution will not solve this problem. Solutions should be ones that are able to adapt to changing situations in the Arctic, such as the growing influence of the military of Russia, climate change or the increased economic utilization. Since Arctic militarization is an issue that is closely related to the interests of each country, only solutions that consider the stance of each country will work. The fact that the issue is still unresolved regardless of several treaties that have already been signed indicates that there are loopholes in the treaty.

The suggested solution is strengthening the power of treaties. It is true that, given the nature of international organizations, it is not possible to enforce all provisions of the treaty. Instead of setting their goal as "Preventing pollution in the Arctic", countries should set specific goals such as "submitting a report to the Arctic Council monthly about natural resources used". It would definitely form an effective solution if countries use statistics or data in the process of forming a policy. Other members of the Arctic Council also should keep on track of countries like Russia that are trying to militarize the Arctic, and should set effective limits toward these actions. Member states should make stricter guidelines to each of the situations so that the guideline guarantees the knowledge of what is right or wrong. Furthermore, nations should hold more frequent conferences for active discussions regarding current issues of the Arctic, and also for imposing restrictions to prevent further harm.

For this, the UN's influence should also be increased. As mentioned, the Arctic issue is related to every country. It is a fact that natural resources from the Arctic are useful resources for all countries in the future. Also, militarization of the Arctic might ruin the whole society as a part of global peace. This means that it is a problem that is related to all countries and needs to be discussed in the whole international society. This issue needs to be considered not only in the Arctic, but also in the perspective of other countries. Since it is a problem related to the interests of all countries.

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