Arctic Council Counterplan

Negative Shell and Affirmative Answers

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Background, Summary, & Strategy

(Do not read this in round- this is meant to help you better understand the case)

Background: What Is the Arctic Council?
The Arctic Council is an international organization made up of the eight countries with territory in the Arctic (including the U.S., Russia, and Canada). It also includes Indigenous groups as permanent participants.

- The Council focuses on scientific research, climate protection, search and rescue, and Indigenous rights.
- It does not discuss military or security issues (right now)- but it still plays a huge role in keeping the Arctic peaceful and cooperative.
- Russia owns more than half of the Arctic coastline, so including it is crucial to any effective policy.

The Council was paused after Russia invaded Ukraine, but many experts believe restoring it- or expanding its scope- is essential to prevent further conflict in the Arctic.

What Does the Arctic Council Counterplan Do?
The CP argues the U.S. federal government should:

- Create a new Arctic Council forum to discuss security and military issues. (Right now, it only discusses science and climate issues, so this would expand its reach).
- Support Russia's participation in the Arctic Council.
- Ask the Council for an advisory opinion on whether or not to do the Affirmative's plan.
- Follow the Council's recommendation.

Main Argument: Rather than acting alone, the U.S. should work cooperatively with other Arctic countries through the Arctic Council to solve Arctic challenges. This builds trust, avoids war, and makes solutions more sustainable.

How Does the CP Work (Solvency)?

- The Arctic Council is the best forum for coordinating scientific research, handling nuclear safety, and managing climate change across countries.
- Including Russia ensures better data and cooperation on shared issues.
- A security-focused forum can help prevent military miscalculation and reduce the risk of conflict in the Arctic.

What Problems Does the CP Solve? (Net Benefits)

- Prevents War- The Arctic is becoming more militarized as ice melts and countries compete over shipping routes and oil. The CP creates a forum to prevent accidents, misunderstandings, and arms races.
- Restores U.S. Leadership- Acting multilaterally strengthens the U.S.'s image as a responsible global power.

- Avoids Politics Disadvantage- Arctic Council work is low-profile and nonpartisan, so it's unlikely to spark political backlash (from the Trump administration or beyond).

Common Affirmative Responses

- Perm Do Both: Aff says we can do the plan and the CP.
    - Neg answer: Acting unilaterally undermines multilateral cooperation. Countries won't trust the Council if the U.S. ignores it.
- Perm Consultation Only: Aff says we can ask the Council but not follow their recommendation.
    - Neg answer: If the U.S. doesn't commit to following the Council's advice, the process loses credibility and doesn't prevent conflict.
- Council Can't Solve: Aff says the Arctic Council doesn't work, especially with Russia.
    - Neg answer: The Council has survived big crises before, including the Cold War. Countries still want it to succeed, and it's the best hope for peace.

When to Run This CP

- When the aff increases military presence or infrastructure in the Arctic.
- When the aff is unilateral (just the U.S. acting alone).
- When aff involves controversial or high-risk action that could escalate conflict.

Key Terms

- Arctic Council- Main forum for international cooperation in the Arctic.
- Multilateralism- Many countries working together.
- Unilateralism- One country acting alone.
- Security Competition- When countries build up military power and risk going to war.
- Advisory Opinion- A formal recommendation from an international body.

1NC Shell

CP Text: The United States federal government should develop a new Arctic Council forum for security discussions and support Russia's participation in the Council. The United States federal government should request an advisory opinion from the Arctic Council forum for security discussions on whether or not to [insert plan]. The United States federal government should comply with the recommendation of the Council.

Solvency: The counterplan solves by signaling new engagement with the Arctic Council - scientific collaboration and cooperative engagement solves for security competition

Evans, former Progressive Policy Institute energy policy fellow, 22

[Alec, MA Candidate at Johns Hopkins, 5/12/22, Atlantic Council, "Engagement Reframed #6: US Arctic policy should prioritize environmental protection", https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/engagement-reframed/engagement-reframed-6-us-arctic-policy-should-prioritize-environmental-protection/, accessed 6/12/25]

2. **Rejoin the Arctic Council, or ensure continued support for its most pressing initiatives.** The Arctic Council has proven to be the foremost player in international climate policy in the region, and **it was specifically designed to function in spite of the security differences of its member states.** The United States and its allies have far more to lose by boycotting the organization than they stand to gain. Washington should resume participation in the Arctic Council as soon as possible; if this is infeasible during Russia's chairmanship of the council, the United States should continue its support for the organization's six expert working groups, or seek to duplicate their activities with regional partners or through other forums. Norway will take over as chair of the council in 2023.

The Arctic Council was responsible for several activities of key import to US Arctic interests. First, the organization was a principal organizer of scientific collaboration that included Russia, most of which has ground to a halt. Second, the Arctic Council created a working group to study radiological sites in the Arctic, create procedures to recover hazardous materials, and craft contingency plans in case of nuclear contamination. The council was set to convene this summer to discuss nuclear waste disposal, but the meeting has been canceled. Third, the organization was largely responsible for monitoring environmental conditions and pollution in the Arctic, and experts fear that without adequate oversight, Russia will be free to conduct harmful activities such as gas-flaring.

Analysts have proposed that the Arctic Council member states other than Russia duplicate the most important organizational projects among themselves, without Russian involvement. In fact, the United States has successfully engaged allies to pursue environmental goals outside of the forum in the past. Moreover, other organizations, such as the International Arctic Science Committee, have continued their operations without Russia since the invasion of Ukraine and could provide an alternative for regional engagement.

However, although this approach would yield more progress than suspending Arctic cooperation entirely, **Russian involvement in Arctic climate collaboration is critical**. The nation owns more than half of the

Arctic coastline, contains the vast majority of the area's radiological contamination, and samples and data from Russia are indispensable for climate change research. Therefore, the United States should seek to resume its participation in the Arctic Council in 2023 at the latest; Washington should also address the environmental concerns that are normally managed by the council's working groups with other Arctic states until that point. US policymakers could also work through the Northern Forum, a Russia-based international organization **that coordinates efforts among subnational Arctic governments;** however, there is no full substitute for national-level collaboration on larger environmental priorities.

In the future, the United States cannot allow its relationship with the Arctic Council to become a victim of security competition. **One of the principal strengths of the Arctic Council is its explicit commitment to avoid security issues.** Then Secretary of State Mike Pompeo upended this norm by raising security concerns in the forum in 2019, and the United States and its Western partners boycotted the organization in response to another security situation, Russia's invasion of Ukraine. If the United States continues to link its security concerns with its Arctic Council activities, the organization's ability to safeguard the Arctic environment could be critically eroded.

Net Benefit: Arctic Council Credibility. The CP both solves the Aff and restores the credibility of the Arctic Council- only the Arctic Council can mediate disputes and prevent great power war.

Werfelli, International Relations researcher and lecturer, 10/14/24

[Wissal, Trends Research & Advisory, "The Arctic: A Risk of Escalating Conflicts", https://trendsresearch.org/insight/the-arctic-a-risk-of-escalating-conflicts/?srsltid=AfmBOoqyrljdUqEUBc_xShVO0Vs-HTn4GYLQjij1BmGQ-SHut54FfFsC, accessed 6/12/25]

Due to the soft power strategy, Arctic governance has created the Arctic Council as a model of inclusiveness and high-level intergovernmental forum, where science diplomacy has played a pivotal role in promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction among circumpolar states on issues of common concern, including those relating to sustainable development and environmental protection. The council brings together the eight Arctic member states, organizations representing the region's native peoples, and several observer states and organizations, **including China**. [24] The Arctic Council was officially established in 1996 under the terms of the Ottawa Declaration, whose signatories were Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), the U.S., Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. It cannot deal with military and sovereignty issues (which are excluded from its field of competence) to concentrate discussions on subjects that can more easily be the subject of consensus such as scientific cooperation, environmental protection, well-being and economic development of indigenous populations, safety of navigation, etc. Much of the Arctic Council's work focuses on scientific and technical topics that are studied in thematic working groups. [25]

Outside the Arctic Council, there are a multitude of official organizations, governmental and non-governmental, whose purpose is to manage various issues in the Arctic; The Arctic Circle is an organization established by Iceland on 15 April 2013. Its mission is to facilitate dialogue between political leaders, business leaders, environmental experts, scientists, indigenous representatives and other international stakeholders on issues related to the Arctic. The four Arctic states located in Europe (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) and Iceland, which has strong historical ties to Europe, are known as the "Nordic countries". Much of the cooperation between these states relates to issues they have in common with Western Russia, the Baltic and Barents Sea regions and the greater Nordic region, including international waters. In addition to those organizations, six other organizations representing Indigenous peoples of the Arctic have permanent participant status. [26]

There are also non-Arctic countries that have been granted observer status, such as Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Poland, France, Spain, Italy, Japan, China, India, South Korea,

Singapore, and Switzerland. This is in addition to many other international organizations such as the UN through some of its programs related to environment and development. European and Asian countries have shown their interests and responsibilities in a strategy document on the Arctic. The EU adopted an integrated policy on the Arctic zone in 2016 and is currently considering updating these guidelines. Asian states' ongoing research agendas and scientific cooperation have made their engagement crucial for the development of Arctic knowledge. Japan and South Korea launched the construction of an icebreaker for scientific purposes, to be deployed in 2026. [27]

There is no doubt that the war in Ukraine has made cooperation and diplomacy in the Arctic more difficult. However, **the U.S. can expect Russia to remain open to peaceful discussions**. Even at the height of the Cold War, the Soviet Union cooperated with the West on Arctic issues, including initiatives such as the 1973 Convention on the Conservation of Polar Bears [28] and the 1987 Murmansk Initiative toward regional cooperation, recognizing the special responsibilities and special interests of the States of the Arctic Region in relation to the protection of the fauna and flora of the Arctic Region and recognizing that the polar bear is a significant resource of the Arctic Region that requires additional protection.

To manage the escalating tensions in the Arctic, states must strike a balance between cooperation and strategic rivalry through bilateral and international diplomacy. Important Arctic nations like the U.S. and Russia hold bilateral discussions to lower the likelihood of armed conflict, frequently concentrating on keeping lines of communication open about security-related issues. Despite the modest progress made in these discussions, they **are nonetheless crucial for defusing any confrontations considering the Arctic's growing militarization.** Security matters are noticeably missing from multilateral institutions like the Arctic Council, which **offers all Arctic nations a diplomatic forum to debate environmental, economic, and indigenous issues.**

Despite the current high tensions and given the potential for mutual destruction, Russia and NATO share an interest in maintaining peace in the Arctic region in addition to diplomatic frameworks that provide legal channels for settling competing claims to seabed resources, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). [29] NATO's attempts to coordinate security plans among its Arctic member states, strengthening regional stability, are another example of multilateral diplomacy in action. Although these diplomatic efforts aid in the management of tensions, they frequently fail to address the more serious security threats brought on by military buildups and geopolitical rivalry in the Arctic. [30]

Conclusion

With rivalry for resources, vital shipping lanes, and military supremacy driving war, the Arctic is quickly changing into a disputed geopolitical region. **Global powers like China, the U.S., and Russia are vying for control of the region because of the melting ice, which has made it more accessible for economic exploitation.** Territorial claims overlap when states bolster their military presence, raising the possibility of error or conflict. **The Arctic runs the risk of turning into a hot spot for future hostilities in the absence of defined methods to handle these tensions.**

There is an urgent need for more international collaboration to stop this escalation. Although the UNCLOS and the Arctic Council have facilitated communication, they are ill-equipped to handle the region's growing security concerns. **Redoubled efforts should concentrate on broadening diplomatic channels to cover security and military matters, setting up a platform for Arctic countries to discuss weapons control and developing guidelines for military behavior.** The moment has come for Arctic countries to engage in formalized diplomatic discussion that covers military and security matters. Whether through a distinct treaty or the Arctic Council, a new global security framework **might offer a forum for controlling the military buildup, negotiating arms control measures, and defining explicit rules of engagement to avoid unintentional conflicts. In addition to lowering the likelihood of violence, this would establish a crisis management system in the Arctic.** International organizations must also mediate conflicts and make sure that competition in the Arctic doesn't jeopardize indigenous

rights or the sustainability of the environment. **In the face of mounting global pressure, the Arctic can only continue to be a region of harmony, collaboration, and shared wealth via concerted effort.**

(Optional) Net Benefit Add-On: The Arctic Council includes Indigenous Nations in the Arctic. Co-designed development projects with consideration for long-term impact on Indigenous communities solves best for Indigenous survival and project success

Brewer and Vorderstrasse 2024
Linda Y. Brewer, Executive, Leader, and Management Adviser; and Edith Vorderstrasse, CEO of Inuit Visions; "Arctic Social Engagements: Best Practice Principles." The Arctic Institute, July 2, 2024.
https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/arctic-social-engagements-best-practice-principles/

Working closely with the local community from the earliest days of the development can help ensure the creation of a long-term legacy. Designing the development with the ability to identify and build local talent through school and specialized programs, understanding the building and facility needs of the community, preserving reusable and limited local resources such as gravel, **and considering long-term economic and social possibilities** (such as the potential for hydroponic farming in abandoned shipping containers) **will honor the traditional values of community benefit sharing and build upon them. Clearly identifying and meeting a community need will ensure that the community not only benefits from the project but has a clear stake in the outcome. Opportunities to create enduring local infrastructure that can be used to support local arts, artists, and traditional cultural events and ceremonies make a statement of the established joint values of the community and the development. Another part of the positive local impacts of development projects may include the introduction of new and reusable technologies that will eventually be owned by the community.** Gathering social inputs, deploying less distancing interview techniques (such as automating the recording of interviews rather than disrupting the interview through interviewer note taking), and sending out periodic community surveys, make a useful and reusable library of information. However, the interference of the Arctic, such as freezing of technologies used outside, should be planned for, particularly as replacing frozen and damaged equipment can be difficult. **Co-designing the development's legacy with the local and Indigenous Peoples can be a great experience for all involved.**

2NC/1NR Extensions

Solvency Extensions

Scientific Cooperation

Reengagement with the Arctic Council solves scientific cooperation – it's the only institution that can create cooperation

Pamuk et al., Reuters senior foreign policy correspondent, 23

[Humeyra Pamuk, Gloria Dickie, Reuters writer, Gwladys Fouche, Reuters writer, 5/9/23, Reuters, “Fears mount for the Arctic as cooperation with Russia stalls”, https://www.reuters.com/world/fears-mount-arctic-cooperation-with-russia-stalls-2023-05-09/, accessed 6/12/25]

WASHINGTON/LONDON/OSLO, May 9 (Reuters) - For nearly three decades, **the Arctic Council has been a successful example of post-Cold War cooperation.**

Its eight members, including Russia and the United States, have cooperated on climate-change research and social development across the ecologically sensitive region.

Now, a year after council members stopped working with Russia following its invasion of Ukraine and as Norway prepares to assume the chairmanship from Moscow on May 11, experts are asking whether the polar body's viability is at risk if it cannot cooperate with the country that controls over half of the Arctic coastline.

An ineffective Arctic Council could have dire implications for the region's environment and its 4 million inhabitants who face the effects of melting sea ice and the interest of non-Arctic countries in the region's mostly untapped mineral resources.

The work of the council, which comprises the eight Arctic states of Finland, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Russia, Denmark, Canada and the United States, in the past has produced binding agreements on environmental protection and preservation.

It is also a rare platform giving a voice to the region's Indigenous peoples. It does not deal with security issues.

But with the end of cooperation with Moscow, about a third of the council's 130 projects are on hold, new projects cannot go ahead and existing ones cannot be renewed. Western and Russian scientists no longer share climate change findings, for example, and cooperation for possible search-and-rescue missions or oil spills has stopped.

"I am worried that this will really hobble the ability of the Arctic Council to work through these various issues," U.S. senator Angus King from Maine told Reuters.

A DIVIDED REGION?

The Arctic is warming, about four times as fast as the rest of the world.

As sea ice vanishes, polar waters are opening to shipping and other industries eager to exploit the region's bounty of natural resources, including oil, gas, and metals such as gold, iron and rare earths.

The discord between Russia and the other Arctic Council members means that an effective response to these changes is far less likely.

'And. frankly, if you're going to come into town and say you have diagnosed what is happening in our city, and you don't even know

"Norway has a big challenge," said John Holdren, co-director of the Harvard Kennedy School's Arctic Initiative and a former science advisor to U.S. President Barack Obama. "That's how to rescue as much as possible of the Arctic Council's good work in the absence of Russia."

Russia argues this work cannot continue without it.

The council is weakening, Russian Arctic Ambassador Nikolay Korchunov told Reuters, saying he was not confident it "will be able to remain the main platform on Arctic issues".

Adding to the worries is the possibility that Russia will go its own way on issues affecting the region or even establish a rival council.

Recently, it has taken steps to expand cooperation in the Arctic with non-Arctic states. On April 24, Russia and China signed a memorandum establishing cooperation between the countries' coast guards in the Arctic.

Days earlier, on April 14, Russia invited China, India, Brazil and South Africa - the BRICS - to conduct research at its settlement on Svalbard, an Arctic archipelago under Norwegian sovereignty where other countries can operate under a 1920 Treaty.

"Russia is seeking to build relationships with some non-Arctic countries, particularly China, and that is a development that is concerning," said David Balton, executive director of the Arctic Steering Committee at the White House.

Russia's Korchunov said Moscow welcomed non-Arctic states in the region, provided they did not come with a military agenda.

"Our focus on a purely peaceful format of partnership also reflects the need of development of scientific and economic cooperation with non-Arctic countries," he said.

HOW TO ENGAGE WITH MOSCOW

Norway says it is "optimistic" a seamless transition of the chairmanship from Russia can be achieved as it is in the interest of all Arctic states to maintain the Arctic Council.

"We need to safeguard the Arctic Council as the most important international forum for Arctic cooperation and make sure it survives," Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Eivind Vad Petersson told Reuters.

That will not be easy, given Oslo's own strained relations with Moscow. In April, Oslo expelled 15 Russian diplomats saying they were spies. Moscow denied the accusations and Korchunov said the expulsions undermined the trust needed for cooperation.

Analysts say NATO-member Norway, which shares an Arctic border with Russia, is still well-placed to handle the delicate balancing act with Moscow.

"Norway has been the most outspoken when it comes to the possibility of keeping the door ajar so that **Russia could**, when politically feasible, **be part of the Arctic Council again**," said Svein Vigeland Rottem, a senior researcher in Arctic governance and security at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo.

Indeed, said lawmaker Aaja Chemnitz Larsen, **the council will eventually need to reengage with Russia** even if that moment has not yet arrived.

"I don't see an Arctic Council without Russia in the future," said Larsen, a Greenland lawmaker at the Danish Parliament and the Chair of Arctic Parliamentarians, a body including MPs from across the Arctic countries.

"We need to be prepared for a different time when the war (in Ukraine) one day will be over."

REMs & Resources

Arctic Council collaboration is key to effective resource extraction – unilateral action risks conflict

Burke Friedman, JURIST Legal News editorial director, 22

[Ingrid Burke, former — Harvard Davis Center for Russian & Eurasian Studies, State Dept, 4/22/22, Foreign Policy, “After Ukraine, Can the Arctic Peace Hold?”, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/04/arctic-council-members-russia-boycott-ukraine-war/, accessed via Nexis, accessed 6/13/25]

Here, the Arctic is a crucial case study. The region's geopolitical importance and fragile system of governance make it fertile ground for either **cooperation or conflict**. And though over the past quarter century the Arctic Council has sustained a workable base level of cooperation, the consequences of a recent decision by seven of its eight member states to boycott council activities over Russia's military aggression could prove devastating.

The Arctic's strategic importance owes in large part to its profound mineral wealth. Courtesy of climate change, rising temperatures are rapidly thawing barriers to the region's bountiful natural resources. According to the Stimson Center[1], the region may contain up to 90 billion barrels of oil and 47 trillion cubic meters of natural gas, while the Wall Street Journal[2] **estimates the Arctic may contain some $1 trillion worth of rare-earth metals—a set of 17 precious metallic elements with critical importance[3] for national defense equipment and consumer electronics.** Other sources of mineral wealth in the region include large stores of gold, platinum, tin, diamonds, and zircon-titanium, as explored in a recent study published in Ore Geology Reviews[4]. As Russian forces continue to batter civilian targets in Ukraine, acting in unrestrained defiance of international law, nations and organizations around the world have chastised and imposed harsh punishments on Moscow. But justified though this outrage may be, **in some cases the perils of alienating Russia outweigh the benefits.**

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The Arctic Council was established[9] in 1996 in a **bid to foster cooperation and coordination among the eight Arctic states**—Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States—as well as Indigenous peoples and other regional stakeholders. These member states act as stewards of the region, implementing a patchwork of national, regional, and international treaties and customary laws related to environmental protection, emergency preparedness, and sustainable development. The chairmanship of the council rotates every two years among the eight member states. Russia has been at its helm[10] since May 2021.

Importantly, the council itself doesn't make or execute laws; rather, **it provides a forum for member states to reach multilateral agreements.** Member states, for example, can draft legally binding agreements that carve out shared responsibilities for regional issues. Past agreements have centered on search and rescue missions[11], marine oil pollution preparedness[12], and enhanced scientific cooperation[13].

Agreements reached at the Arctic Council supplement a variety of international legal and policy frameworks, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea[14] and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Polar Code[15]. Its work is also complemented by a patchwork of other regional and international organizations with varying scopes and focuses. Some of these include the Arctic Coast Guard Forum[16], IMO, Saami Council[17], and Barents Euro-Arctic Council[18]—though, like the Arctic Council, the latter recently suspended cooperation[19] with Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

In short, there is no one entity that bears ultimate responsibility for Arctic governance. Relative peace in the region has long rested on the assumption that for the eight states wishing to preserve—and retain control of—their Arctic territories, the benefits of cooperation outweigh its drawbacks. And in the past, this utilitarian balance has held despite provocations.

Climate

Arctic Council solves climate change

Herrmann, The Arctic Institute senior fellow, 19

[Victoria, 11/19/19, Arctic Institute, "WANTED: A Sustained, Engaged, and Committed American Arctic Nation", https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/wanted-sustained-engaged-committed-american-arctic-nation/]

Augment America's commitment to leading on climate action in the region, both at home and abroad

Creating a strong reputation for credibility regarding the commitment to invest in low-carbon economic growth, climate-resilient infrastructure development, and calculated collaboration across borders on environmental treaties provides the necessary next-step for American Arctic leadership. Like the Special Representative and Steering Committee, momentum exists upon which to build.

Domestically, the Green New Deal offers an opportunity to lead in the American Arctic by mitigating climate threats through a "10-year mobilization" to reduce carbon emissions in the United States. The United States could extend its vision in sourcing 100 percent of the country's electricity from renewable and zero-emission power, digitizing the power grid, updating building efficiency, and overhauling transportation to Alaska. In a state where many communities are diesel reliant off-road and off-grid settlements, this is not an easy task. However, committing federal technical and financial resources that empower U.S. Arctic communities to overcome energy and climate security risks would send a strong message to other Arctic nations about the United States' ability to lead by example.

Internationally, the United States can show climate leadership by committing to reduce black carbon emissions in the Arctic. Black carbon is the soot produced by burning fossil fuels and biomass, which increases snow and ice melt by darkening their surfaces and, in turn, increasing their retention of warmth. **Roughly one-third of warming in the Arctic is caused by black carbon emission of Arctic Council members, including the United States.** Under the Trump Administration, America has pulled out from joint reduction targets through the Arctic Council. This was a grave mistake and a missed opportunity for straightforward cross-border cooperation. The United States can show regional leadership by reversing this decision and re-committing to its target reductions for black carbon.

The proposed policy commitments outlined in this commentary are not blue-sky proposals. **They are tangible and targeted options for overcoming the geopolitical challenges of climate change and enhancing American Arctic leadership. However, they could only be achieved by a driven, bipartisan effort.**

Climate change impacts are already costing billions of dollars in damages, undermining national security, devastating regional economies, and inflicting irreplaceable cultural loss on the four million people that call the Arctic home. In 2019, the United States has the potential to act courageously and cooperatively across the Arctic by taking advantage of the low-hanging opportunities presented here. It is now up to Congress to adopt these measures and push America further into its still unrealized Arctic leadership position. However, if it chooses to continue the path of Arctic reluctance, then every American will face the consequences of the impending Arctic thaw.

War

Arctic Council collaboration prevents militarization in the Arctic which is uniquely prone to miscalculation and escalation

Gricius, Arctic Defense Security Network graduate fellow, 22

[Gabriella, a graduate fellow with the North American and Arctic Defense Security Network, and Ph.D. candidate in political science, Colorado State University, authored this piece for The Conversation in April 2022. Colorado State is a contributing institution to The Conversation, an independent collaboration between editors and academics that provides informed news analysis and commentary to the general public., 4/20/22, Colorado State University, "Why freezing the Arctic Council is bad news for global security", https://source.colostate.edu/why-freezing-the-arctic-council-is-bad-news-for-global-security/, accessed 6/13/25]

For the past quarter-century, the Arctic has been a unique zone of cooperation among the eight countries of the high north: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and the United States. Even when relations between Moscow and the West soured, the Arctic Council's work was a reminder that multilateral partnerships could thrive despite global discord.

The point of the Arctic Council is to foster collaboration in areas such as scientific research, search and rescue operations and the challenges posed by climate change. Under its auspices, friends and adversaries alike – as well as nonstate actors, such as Indigenous groups – can sit down, talk and find common ground. In early 2022, lawmakers from Norway nominated the council for the Nobel Peace Prize for its collaborative spirit.

That collaboration ended shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. One week after the start of the war, seven of the eight Arctic Council members announced that they would "pause" their work with the organization. Russia, which holds the council's presidency through 2023, was left ostracized.

The freeze of the Arctic Council is a loss on many fronts. As a scholar of Arctic security, I see **cooperation in the region as essential to global security, and I believe an expanded set of institutions is needed to reflect new global realities as the Arctic warms.**

Security and cooperation in the Arctic

The eight Arctic countries formed the Arctic Council in 1996. While the council explicitly steers clear of military issues, its members are stewards of the Arctic region. Unsurprisingly, **the organization has grown in importance with global warming.**

Warmer temperatures and declining sea ice are opening new shipping routes and, likely, expanding opportunities to exploit oil, gas and other critical minerals – changes that could spur **conflict if not handled carefully.**

Through the council, the Arctic states have made agreements related to search and rescue operations, oil pollution and scientific collaboration. The council has tracked environmental changes in the region with its yearly Arctic Climate Impact Assessment reports. Even when relations between East and West were at their worst, including in 2014 when Russia invaded and annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine, joint endeavors in the Arctic remained strong.

Pausing the work of the Arctic Council was an understandable response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Yet in doing so, **the other Arctic countries lost a valuable line of communication**

with Moscow. In time, it will be important to resume the council or establish a new institution in its place.

Indeed, working with Russia in the Arctic is even more important now than it was before the invasion. From a global security perspective, **it is essential that the hot war in Europe be prevented from spilling over into the Arctic and one of the world's last wildernesses.**

The case for engaging Russia

Consider, for example, that **while tensions are at an all-time high in Ukraine, it might be easy to mistake a flock of geese or a meteor shower for a military attack**. Having a way for errors like these to be **quickly remedied will be important in this new era of geopolitical competition.**

Preserving and enhancing cooperation in the Arctic will take bold leadership. Some critics argue that institutionalizing military dialogue with Russia in the Arctic is an improper response to wanton aggression in Eastern Europe and could be seen as legitimizing Russia's actions. These are valid concerns.

However, **giving up on cooperation would be a mistake.** The whole world will benefit if the high north can avoid the fate of militarization, a costly arms race and the terrible specter of war.

Ideally, engaging Russia within an expanded set of regional institutions – an invigorated Arctic Council, to be sure, but also a new military forum – would precipitate a cooperation spiral, increasing cooperation that could help lessen tensions elsewhere. **Even if collaboration were confined to the Arctic, this would boost global security.**

A new Arctic?

In the past, the Arctic states sought to maintain peace and stability in their region by divorcing contentious military issues from areas where common ground was easier to find. This has been the modus vivendi of the Arctic Council since its founding.

Going forward, it would be better to recognize that robust and ongoing cooperation is needed on security issues, too. **Trust between Russia and the West might never return, but cooperation in the Arctic cannot be allowed to disappear with it.**

Arctic Council solves militarization and miscalculation – it's the only framework to resolve the aff's internal links

Tingstad, Rand senior physical scientist, 20

[Abbie, 1/29/20, Defense One, "Today's Arctic Diplomacy Can't Handle Tomorrow's Problems", https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/01/todays-arctic-diplomacy-cant-handle-tomorrows-problems/162719/, accessed 6/13/25]

The international structures that have helped address many Arctic problems through negotiation and cooperation are insufficient for the military and security challenges brought on by climate change.

Decades of diplomacy have fostered forums such as the Arctic Council, which regularly brings together stakeholders (including Arctic and non-Arctic government representatives, indigenous leaders, business interests) to seek agreement on issues such as search and rescue, oil pollution and scientific cooperation. Another one, the Arctic Frontiers conference, wraps up Jan. 30 in Tromsø, Norway. Other meetings like the Arctic Circle, Arctic Dialogues, and the Arctic Shipping Forum enable further debate.

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There is an Arctic Security Forces Roundtable and a limited number of bi-lateral or multi-lateral Arctic security exercises. These provide some opportunities for engagement but lack the consistency or clear mission of non-military Arctic cooperative activities. Furthermore, the Security Forces Roundtable has excluded Russia since 2014, when it seized Crimea and launched military activity in Ukraine.

Creating a regular, inclusive discussion of defense issues is vital for the Arctic region, where the greatest near-term security risk may be that of military miscalculation. Resource wars are far off and unlikely; most potentially profitable ventures are in undisputed areas. Investors and insurers can weigh profit and risk potential on that front.

But there are at least two scenarios that could lead to dangerous military miscalculation:

A race to militarize the Arctic, which will not only result in diplomatic consequences and potentially dampen emerging economic prospects, but also increase the likelihood of military assets coming into close contact; or

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The former scenario represents too much security. The latter could emerge under too little. The two scenarios are equally dangerous and shifting conditions could tip the balance in either direction. Either could begin with non-adversarial intensions and "snowball" into increased military activity and decreased space for dialogue and cooperation. Both are avoidable, but only if there are opportunities to gain mutual understanding, if not more formal security cooperation.

What type of forum would fulfill such a need? There are three existing options, none of which are presently ideal.

First, the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable could be more closely modeled after the Arctic Council and Arctic Coast Guard Forum in their focus on inclusivity, open and regular multi-lateral dialogue, and finding common ground on policy. Given its explicit focus on military issues and direct approach to dialogue, this is probably the best option. The biggest hurdle here could be getting the U.S. to accept Russian and (perhaps) Chinese membership.

Second, **the Arctic Council or Arctic Coast Guard Forum could expand their purviews to include Arctic regional-specific military issues.** However, security issues are so sensitive that including them could undermine these organizations' effectiveness in conducting their present missions.

Third, forums such as the Arctic Circle (and perhaps smaller gatherings such as the upcoming Arctic Frontiers meeting) could more robustly aim for less formal, Track II diplomacy. This may already be happening to some extent. The Arctic Circle especially attracts diverse and sometimes high-level government official participation. It isn't clear, however, whether such a backchannel diplomatic approach could be sufficiently scaled up in a future Arctic where there are more frequent and fast-moving issues on the table.

Dialogue on touchy military issues in the Arctic is becoming increasingly important to avoid either the "military heavy" or "security void" scenarios. An Arctic war would have no winner. Anyone who ends up on top militarily in the region would be left with the costly and time-intensive task of running security in a region too devastated to enjoy what little economic gains are possible as more of it becomes navigable.

Net Benefit Extensions

Reinvigorating the Arctic Council prevents escalatory militarization in the Arctic.

Gabriella Gricius 22. Graduate fellow with the North American and Arctic Defense Security Network, and Ph.D. candidate in political science, Colorado State University; The Conversation, "Why freezing the Arctic Council is bad news for global security," https://source.colostate.edu/why-freezing-the-arctic-council-is-bad-news-for-global-security/

For the past quarter-century, the Arctic has been a unique zone of cooperation among the eight countries of the high north: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and the United States. Even when relations between Moscow and the West soured, the Arctic Council's work was a reminder that multilateral partnerships could thrive despite global discord. The point of the Arctic Council is to foster collaboration in areas such as scientific research, search and rescue operations and the challenges posed by climate change. Under its auspices, friends and adversaries alike – as well as nonstate actors, such as Indigenous groups – can sit down, talk and find common ground. In early 2022, lawmakers from Norway nominated the council for the Nobel Peace Prize for its collaborative spirit. That collaboration ended shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. One week after the start of the war, seven of the eight Arctic Council members announced that they would "pause" their work with the organization. Russia, which holds the council's presidency through 2023, was left ostracized. The freeze of the Arctic Council is a loss on many fronts. As a scholar of Arctic security, I see cooperation in the region as essential to global security, and I believe an expanded set of institutions is needed to reflect new global realities as the Arctic warms. Security and cooperation in the Arctic The eight Arctic countries formed the Arctic Council in 1996. While the council explicitly steers clear of military issues, its members are stewards of the Arctic region. Unsurprisingly, the organization has grown in importance with global warming. Warmer temperatures and declining sea ice are opening new shipping routes and, likely, expanding opportunities to exploit oil, gas and other critical minerals – changes that could spur conflict if not handled carefully. Through the council, the Arctic states have made agreements related to search and rescue operations, oil pollution and scientific collaboration. The council has tracked environmental changes in the region with its yearly Arctic Climate Impact Assessment reports. Even when relations between East and West were at their worst, including in 2014 when Russia invaded and annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine, joint endeavors in the Arctic remained strong. Pausing the work of the Arctic Council was an understandable response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Yet in doing so, the other Arctic countries lost a valuable line of communication with Moscow. In time, it will be important to resume the council or establish a new institution in its place. Indeed, working with Russia in the Arctic is even more important now than it was before the invasion. From a global security perspective, it is essential that the hot war in Europe be prevented from spilling over into the Arctic and one of the world's last wildernesses. The case for engaging Russia Consider, for example, that while tensions are at an all-time high in Ukraine, it might be easy to mistake a flock of geese or a meteor shower for a military attack. Having a way for errors like these to be quickly remedied will be important in this new era of geopolitical competition. Preserving and enhancing cooperation in the Arctic will take bold leadership. Some critics argue that institutionalizing military dialogue with Russia in the Arctic is an improper response to wanton aggression in Eastern Europe and could be seen as legitimizing Russia's actions. These are valid concerns. However, giving up on cooperation would be a mistake. The whole world will benefit if the high north can avoid the fate of militarization, a costly arms race and the terrible specter of war. Ideally, engaging Russia within an expanded set of regional institutions – an invigorated Arctic Council, to be sure, but also a new military forum – would precipitate a cooperation spiral, increasing cooperation that could help lessen tensions elsewhere. Even if collaboration were confined to the Arctic, this would boost global security. A new Arctic? In the past, the Arctic states sought to maintain peace and stability in their region by divorcing contentious military issues from areas where common ground was easier to find. This has been the modus vivendi of the Arctic Council since its founding. Going forward, it would be better to recognize that robust and ongoing cooperation is needed on security issues, too. Trust between Russia and the West might never return, but cooperation in the Arctic cannot be allowed to disappear with it.

The Arctic Council checks all conflict.

Tim Ellis 15. Staff writer, Citing Lawson Brigham, syndicated foreign affairs journalist, Distinguished Professor of Geography & Arctic Policy, University of Alaska Fairbanks and Senior Fellow at the Institute of the North in Anchorage, "US To Assume Arctic Council Chair Amid Dispute Over Russian Military Moves," Alaska Public Media, 4/23, http://www.alaskapublic.org/2015/04/23/us-to-assume-arctic-council-chair-amid-dispute-over-russian-military-moves

Fran Ulmer can speak from experience about the importance of the Arctic Council and its work on finding solutions to problems in the region. "It's been hugely helpful in getting the Arctic nations to work together on things like the two agreements that were just adopted over the past two years: the search-and-rescue agreement, and the responding-to-oil-spills agreement," she said. Ulmer served as lieutenant governor and later as chancellor of the University of Alaska-Anchorage before appointed in 2010 to the national Commission on the BP Horizon Oil Spill and then in 2011 as chair of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission. She says it's important to understand the significance of the United States assuming the Arctic Council chairmanship, because of the organization's research on climate change and its impact on this region. And the growing importance of that work as Arctic nations ramp up development of oil and other resources here. "To the extent that people are thinking long-term about where's energy going to come from," she said, "the Arctic is one of the places where it is highly likely that it will be a supply source – whether it's from Russian waters or Canadian waters or U.S. waters or Norwegian waters. The opportunity to exploit those resources is due in part to melting Arctic sea ice. "Last week, we had the lowest winter sea-ice extent ever recorded in the Arctic," Ulmer said. And that in turn has opened up previously inaccessible offshore areas to oil and gas exploration and development. "Thirty percent of the undiscovered gas in the world is in the Arctic region," she said. "Thirteen percent of the undiscovered oil is projected to be in the Arctic region." Ulmer says Arctic Council member nations have worked together to develop plans and policies to deal with the tricky business of developing Arctic oil resources, while at the same time researching the impacts of burning those fossil fuels on the region's climate and peoples. She says the council cooperates, because its members understand that they're all in it together. "If there's a spill someplace in the Arctic, because of Arctic Ocean currents," she said, "it's going to affect wildlife, it's going to affect fish, it's going to affect shorelines – not just in one country, but in other countries." But some observers believe international tensions are now creating divisions among Arctic Council members. They note that Secretary of State John Kerry will lead the U.S. delegation at the Arctic Council's ministerial meeting that convenes Friday morning in Iqaluit, the capital of the Canadian territory of Nunavut. But his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, won'tbe there, reportedly as a tit-for-tat response to snubs by the Canadians, who didn't attend an Arctic Council meeting last year in Moscow to protest Russian aggression in Ukraine and Crimea. "There's no way to de-link completely the Arctic from geopolitics in the world," said Lawson Brigham, a UAF distinguished professor of geography and Arctic policy and a retired strategic planner for the Coast Guard. Brigham says he doesn't think the dispute will disrupt this weekend's meeting. He says the Arctic Council specifically prohibited itself from involvement in military matters when it was formed in 1996. And he thinks it's unlikely that Russian saber-rattling in the Arctic will lead to hostilities, because that would be bad for business. "The notion that we're headed to some kind of regional conflict in the Arctic – I don't buy it," Brigham said. "Because all of the countries, including our Russian friends, want to sell natural resources to the planet." But Matt Felling, an aide to Sen. Lisa Murkowski, says Russia's military buildup in the region isn't going unnoticed. "We've seen them moving military aircraft. We've seen them boosting military muscle in the Arctic,…" he said. Felling says Murkowski believes that shouldn't deter the Arctic Council from its work. He says Russia's involvement with the council is essential, because it's the biggest Arctic nation with the biggest stake in developing the region's resources.

Arctic Council leadership solves war.

Abbie Tingstad 20. Senior physical scientist and associate director of the Engineering and Applied Sciences Department at the RAND Corporation; "Today's Arctic Diplomacy Can't Handle Tomorrow's Problems,"

https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/01/todays-arctic-diplomacy-cant-handle-tomorrows-problems/162719/]

The international structures that have helped address many Arctic problems through negotiation and cooperation are insufficient for the military and security challenges brought on by climate change.

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Avoids Politics DA- Arctic Council work flies under the radar – no Trump capital loss or Congressional interest

Jacobsen & Vigeland-Rottem, Arctic researchers, 5/12/25

[Marc & Svein, Marc Jacobsen is an Associate Professor at the Royal Danish Defence College's Centre for Arctic Security Studies where he researches security politics and diplomacy in the Arctic. Marc was also a Member – in various positions – of The Arctic Institute between 2013 and 2020. He recently co-edited the book 'Greenland in Arctic Security' which is available via open access here. Svein Vigeland Rottem is a Senior Researcher at Fridtjof Nansen Institute where he researches Arctic politics and the Arctic Council. He has published a number of peer reviewed articles and books on these issues. He has also organized several events at conferences like Arctic Circle and Arctic Frontiers., Arctic Institute, "The Arctic Council in the Shadow of Geopolitics", https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/arctic-council-shadow-geopolitics/, accessed 6/13/25]

It may not sound like something Trump would want a stake in, but **there is a chance that the Arctic Council does not have his attention whatsoever due to its limited activity – and because there are plenty of other things that keep him occupied.** If that is the case, it may actually prove to be an advantage for the Arctic Council, which under normal circumstances would otherwise strengthen its relevance if meetings were prioritized by the highest political level. However, its current fragile existence and the crucial challenges make increased activity and regional consensus the overriding success criteria. In this light, it may be beneficial if State Secretary Marco Rubio is not at the table.

Indigenous Consultation Net Benefit

Advocating against climate change in the Arctic context without citing and referencing Indigenous scholars leads to their erasure.
Todd 2016
Zoe Todd, Lecturer in Anthropology at Carleton University, "An Indigenous Feminist's Take On The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word For Colonialism." Journal of Historical Sociology Vol. 29 No. 1 March 2016.
https://mathewarthur.com/whats-new/pdf/todd-ontological-turn.pdf

The relationship between public consciousness of climate change and the Arctic has been shaped significantly by the work of Inuit activists like Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Rosemarie Kupatana, and others. This work is visible in public campaigns to address climate change: Greenpeace reminds us daily, after all, that the Arctic is a commons in need of saving from climate change (Save The Arctic 2015). Such heavy environmental advocacy around the climate and the Arctic as commons, in turn, has helped polar bears to become one of the most instantly recognizable symbols of climate change for many people around the globe (Slocum 2004). I think to a fair amount of people worldwide, **climate change and the Arctic are inextricably bound in the public consciousness**, and they can be thought of as what anthropologist Elizabeth Reddy (2014) calls the Anthropocene: a 'charismatic mega-category'. Ironically, **when climate change and the Arctic act as mega-categories, they can quickly erase arctic Indigenous peoples and their laws and philosophies from their discourses. It is easier for Euro-Western people to tangle with a symbolic polar bear on a Greenpeace website or in a tweet than it is to acknowledge arctic Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems and legal-political realities.** So, I waited. I waited through the whole talk, to hear the Great Latour credit Indigenous thinkers for their millennia of engagement with sentient environments, with cosmologies that enmesh people into complex relationships between themselves and all relations, and with climates and atmospheres as important points of

organization and action. I waited. I waited, with baited breath, as I do through most of these types of events in the UK—waited to hear a whisper of the lively and deep intellectual traditions borne out in Indigenous Studies departments, community halls, fish camps, classrooms, band offices and Friendship Centres across Turtle Island (North America) right now. European and North American academies are separated, after all, by a mere pond, and our kinship relations and ongoing colonial legacies actually weave us much more closely together than geography suggests. It never came. He did not mention Inuit. Or Anishinaabeg. Or Nehiyawak. Or any Indigenous thinkers at all. In fact, he spent a great deal of time interlocuting with a Scottish thinker (John Hume), long dead. And with Gaia. To be fair, this was a gracious gesture to his Scottish hosts for the series of talks—the Gifford Lectures—that this particular presentation was part of, and a kind nod to the contributions of the Scottish Enlightenment, specifically natural theology, to Euro-Western thinking in the last few centuries. However, I was left wondering, **when will I hear someone reference Indigenous thinkers in a direct, contemporary and meaningful way** in European lecture halls? **Without filtering ideas through white intermediaries**— apologies to the vast majority of my anthropology colleagues—**but by citing and quoting Indigenous thinkers directly**, unambiguously and generously. **As thinkers in their own right, not just disembodied representatives of an amorphous Indigeneity that serves European intellectual or political purposes, and not just as research subjects or vaguely defined 'collaborators'. As dynamic Philosophers and Intellectuals**, full stop. **Rather than bequeathing climate activism to the Al Gores of the world, when will Euro-American scholarship take the intellectual labour and activist work of Inuit women** like Rosemarie Kuptana and Sheila Watt-Cloutier **seriously?**

Climate solutions based on Indigenous knowledge solves best for climate change, preserves biodiversity, and provides resiliency and adaptation. Consultation is key. Weichenrieder 2024

Simone Weichenrieder, Climate and Nature Policy Specialist with experience in Arctic-focused initiatives and co-leader of the Association for Polar Early Career Scientists delegation, "Leveraging Indigenous Knowledge for Effective Nature-Based Solutions in the Arctic." The Arctic Institute, August 27, 2024.
https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/leveraging-indigenous-knowledge-effective-nature-based-solutions-arctic/

The Arctic stands at the forefront of our global climate crisis. Experiencing warming at more than twice the rate of the rest of the planet, the Arctic faces dramatic transformations as ancient ice melts, permafrost thaws, and ecosystems undergo upheaval. **These changes** lead to a cascade of challenges, from coastal erosion to shifting wildlife habitats, **threaten**ing **both natural landscapes and the communities that depend on them.** In response to these pressing challenges, **integrating Indigenous knowledge into nature-based solutions** (NbS) **presents a promising approach to enhancing climate resilience. NbS is a recently emerging term for actions to leverage the power of ecosystems to protect people, optimize infrastructure, and ensure a stable and biodiverse future.** These natural (climate) solutions include conservation efforts, habitat restoration, water resource management, and green infrastructure initiatives.1) By harnessing natural ecosystems, **NbS can provide up to 37 percent of the mitigation needed by 2030 to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement and give several benefits for climate adaptation and biodiversity enhancement.** 2) **Informed and well-structured NbS can reduce climate change impacts on local communities and counter biodiversity loss.** However, effective NbS are complex and difficult to design, especially in fragile ecosystems.

Therefore, **Indigenous communities and their knowledges are crucial for finding effective solutions to preserve and protect the Arctic. Combining NbS with Indigenous knowledge**, also known as traditional ecological knowledge, **can greatly enhance the effectiveness of local climate and conservation actions. Indigenous peoples, despite comprising only a small fraction of the global population, manage between 13 and 20 percent of the world's lands, which contain approximately 80 percent of the remaining global biodiversity.** In the Arctic, this includes communities such as the Sámi in Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Northwest Russia; the Nenets, Khanty, Evenk, and Chukchi in Russia; the Aleut, Yupik, and Inuit (Iñupiat) in Alaska; the Inuit (Inuvialuit) in Canada; and the Inuit (Kalaallit) in Greenland.3) Since Indigenous communities' livelihoods are often directly linked to the surrounding land, northern Indigenous groups are particularly vulnerable to climate change, experiencing its impacts more intensely and rapidly than many other regions. For millennia, **Arctic Indigenous groups** like the Inuit and Sámi **have developed sophisticated land management systems and ecological knowledge crucial for maintaining their ecosystems' delicate balance.**

Giving Indigenous people decision-making authority over development projects, engaging with the legacy of colonialism, and prioritizing traditional knowledge and practices is the only way to decolonize the energy industry
Schmidt 2024
Emily Schmidt, Arctic security and Indigenous responses to renewable energy developments, "Through Colonial Patterns of Extractivism: Self-Governance as a Sustainable Path Forward." The Arctic Institute, August 20, 2024.
https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/through-colonial-patterns-extractivism-self-governance-sustainable-path-forward/

The shift towards renewable resources holds the potential to contribute significantly to the decolonization of the energy sector, provided Indigenous governance and practices are integrated into the process. It is vital for these processes to be guided by Indigenous leadership in order to reduce the impact of colonialism in climate change mitigation. Additionally, **without a full recognition of the structural and cultural ways in which governments perpetuate conflicts stemming from the oil and gas industry, these practices will continue to increase in the renewable energy sector.** Within Canada and Norway, there is significant room available to improve the systems in which Indigenous peoples have increased dialogue in decision-making processes. **Meaningful engagement requires** addressing power dynamics in the energy sector and **confronting colonial legacies that perpetuate inequality and marginalization.** By prioritizing Indigenous rights and knowledge, a more just and sustainable future can be built for Arctic states and the people living in them. Moreover, **true reconciliation and progress in decolonizing the energy sector depend on concrete actions beyond mere consultations. It necessitates the implementation of policies that not only acknowledge but also actively incorporate traditional ecological knowledge and Indigenous management practices. This means providing Indigenous communities with genuine control over resource development in their territories, ensuring fair and equitable benefit-sharing, and creating legal frameworks that safeguard their rights and lands.** As Canada and Norway move forward, embedding these principles into

their national and international energy policies will be crucial in achieving long-term sustainability and justice for Indigenous peoples and the broader global community.

AT: Perm do Both

Perm fails – unilateral action trades off with the cooperative engagement of the plan

Breines, UNESCO former director, 25

[Ingeborg, Norwegian peace educator, former director in UNESCO and former president of the International Peace Bureau/IPB, 2/4/25, International Peace Bureau, “Arctic Council – what and where to?Arctic Council – too important to be squeezed between the great powers!”, https://ipb.org/arctic-council-what-and-where-toarctic-council-too-important-to-be-squeezed-between-the-great-powers/, accessed 6/13/25]

The strong militarization in the Arctic is the elephant in the room in the Arctic Council as well as in the Norwegian and Nordic public. In order for the Arctic Council to be able to meet the existential environmental challenges, **politicians must contribute to ensure that the geopolitical conflict lines give way to practical cooperation.**

The geopolitical situation in the Arctic has worsened dramatically by the Swedish and Finnish entry into NATO and the significant expansion of the number of US bases in the Nordic countries. And not far from the Norwegian border, Russia has its large military base on the Kola Peninsula with nuclear submarines and nuclear weapons.

Bilateral agreements have been signed on 47 American so-called joint areas in the Nordic countries; Sweden 17, Finland 15 and Denmark 3. In 2023, Norway got four such “joint areas” and in 2024 the government agreed to a further eight bases, almost without any protests from the Norwegian parliament.

Through this process, the Nordic countries have become part of a global network of around 900 American bases in over 80 countries. By comparison, Russia is considered to have eight bases on foreign soil and China one. In a short period of time Nordic defence has been Americanized – almost without debate. The US has actually taken over parts of Norway almost to full applause! This in addition to the fact that Norway for many years has been considered “NATO’s eyes and ears in the North”, with sophisticated American surveillance and espionage installations in the air, on land, at sea and probably also in cyberspace, allowed over time by shifting governments.

As an example, the new American bases allow the United States to attack Russia with nuclear weapons without the Nordic countries being aware of it. A potential war between the United States and Russia could take place on Norwegian and Nordic soil. Norway disregards Article I of the Constitution on Norwegian sovereignty as well as the traditional Norwegian policy that there should be neither foreign bases nor stored nuclear weapons on Norwegian soil in peacetime. The almost total servility towards the United States is difficult to understand.

These decisions have only to a modest extent been made known to the public. Perhaps not even to the majority of the parliament? To the extent that people in Norway are informed, there is confusion about what is cooperation with NATO and what is cooperation with the USA. This confusion is probably intentional. For a long time, the public has been led to believe that NATO is absolutely essential to Norwegian security. At the same time, there is concern about the democratic collapse in the USA. There is reason to believe that people would be much more sceptical to these new bases if they had known that they were agreed upon on a bilateral basis between the USA and Norway, initiated by the USA and with no other connection to NATO than the US NATO dominance.

This heavy militarization of the Arctic will not contribute to increased security, as both the Norwegian and the other Nordic governments preach, **quite the opposite**. The escalation is by the Russian side considered as a serious threat to their security. If the security policy goal of the Russian president was to keep NATO away from the Russian border, he has achieved exactly the opposite.

AT: No Impact

Arctic conflict causes extinction.

Shute '23 [Joe; September 12; Ph.D. Researcher at Manchester Metropolitan University; UnHerd, "An Arctic War is Coming," https://unherd.com/2023/09/an-arctic-war-is-coming-russia-china/]

A similar story is being recorded right across the High North. "Arctic amplification" is the term meteorologists use for the accelerated rate of global warming. But the same amplification is occurring with the geopolitics of the region. The Arctic is melting — one scientific study, published in June, claimed that the first summer in which all sea ice disappears could occur as early as the 2030s — and, from China to the US to Putin's Russia, suddenly everyone wants a piece. The **era** of "Arctic **exceptionalism**" declared by Russian president Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987 is resolutely **over**, his entreaties for the Arctic to remain a "zone of peace" free from conflict and exploitation forgotten. As climate change accelerates and Russia's invasion of Ukraine has **cleaved** apart the international **order**, the Arctic has emerged as the potential theatre of the next **global conflict**.

Alexander, who also represents the Gwich'in on the Arctic council (which includes the eight Arctic states, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, the US and Russia) warns that the global **race** to plunder the Arctic could have **devastating** consequences. "If you don't co-operate on the Arctic and we don't get these things right, then I'll tell you this, my friend: the world can change very rapidly."

Russia, whose territory **spans** around 53% of the Arctic Ocean shoreline, and **China** are rapidly developing plans to expand the **N**orthern **S**ea **R**oute. The maritime passage between the east and west of the Arctic Ocean is regarded by the Kremlin as vital to avoid Western sanctions. It is already possible to navigate the route for anyone with several briefcases full of dollars to pay for the mandatory Russian ice breakers which accompany any transit as patrol vessels. In 2024, the Kremlin is planning to commence year-round navigations of the route, through which it hopes to increase the amount of cargo shipped from around 30 million annually to 80 million.

China — which has ominously declared itself a "**near-Arctic** state" — also harbours ambitions to transform the passage into a silk road of the far north, while in March, a Russian delegation to India held talks over new co-operation over the route. The **West** is similarly flexing its muscles, with Finland (and the expected accession of Sweden) extending **NATO's** borders into the Arctic. In June, the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken announced that the US would be opening an outpost in the far-north Norwegian town of Tromsø, stressing the need to have "a diplomatic footprint" above the Arctic Circle. "The war in **Ukraine** has really torpedoed this idea of Arctic exceptionalism," explains Dr Neil Melvin, Director of International Security at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). "The whole focus of northern Europe has basically now shifted to building security against Russia."

As Melvin points out, the heavy losses sustained by Russia's land army in Ukraine will **force** it to become increasingly **reliant** on its **nuc**lear force**s** stationed in the Arctic, where the UK and US have also long operated their own attack submarines. Russia's Northern Fleet comprises of a dozen or so nuclear-powered attack submarines as well as surface vessels, including two heavy nuclear-powered missile battle cruisers. In recent years, Russia has also reoccupied old Cold War-era Arctic bases to bolster its presence. "They will feel more **vulnerable** as a result of not having a strong army, and I think we are likely to see them **threaten** nuclear options much more as part of national defence," Melvin says of Russia's designs in the Arctic. "They are going to be much more **explicit** and threatening."

Beneath the ice, the Arctic possesses untold riches. The region is estimated to contain a fifth of the world's undiscovered oil and gas reserves and rare earth elements such as gold, nickel and zinc. While most of these are present within the largely undisputed land borders of the Arctic nations, it is the increasingly navigable international **waters** that present the most likely **flashpoint**. An ongoing process led by a United Nations commission is considering sovereignty rights to the central Arctic Ocean between Russia, Denmark and Canada. While Putin is cooperating with the process so far, he has also planted a flag in the most literal sense — dropping a titanium standard of the Russian Federation two miles beneath the ocean on the North Pole seabed in 2007. Fishing rights are also key; as southern oceans heat up, species will migrate ever further north, causing estimated catches in higher latitudes to increase by up to 20 per cent by 2050.

According to Professor Klaus Dodds, an expert in geopolitics and ice studies based at Royal Holloway and author of the recent book, Border Wars, the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard could prove another area of conflict. Under a treaty originally signed in 1920, a host of countries including China and Russia have rights to engage in commercial activities across Svalbard. Moscow conducts coal mining operations on the island of Spitsbergen (and insists on referring to Svalbard by the same name, to emphasise its historic claim on the land). In settlements such as Barentsburg, Russian is the predominant language.

"The concern is we know we have potential **flashpoints** like Svalbard which, having caused agitation and tension in the past, might be **escalate**d very **quickly**," Dodds says. Aggression could be anything from attacks on underwater **cables** (last year, a Russian trawler was linked to the severing of a sub-sea fibre-optic cable which linked Svalbard to the Norwegian mainland), to an outright attack on oil and gas **infrastructure**. "The Norwegian European Arctic will be the space where, if anything, this is most likely to happen," Dodds says. "That would also be the ultimate **opportunity** for Russia to test **NATO**'s resolve."

Regardless of the potential for **nuclear conflict**, a burning Arctic poses grave threats for humanity. The Arctic permafrost contains peatland soils which are the world's most vital carbon sink. Globally, peatlands store twice as much carbon as all the forests combined. When this burns, it releases the carbon back into the atmosphere creating something of a doom loop. According to the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service, wildfires across Canada have released 290 megatons of carbon into the atmosphere between January and August, more than 25% of the global total for 2023 in the year to date.

Thawing permafrost is also exposing chemical and radioactive waste and millennia-old "zombie viruses". In 2016, around 100,000 reindeer were culled in the Russian far north after an anthrax outbreak that killed a 12-year-old boy. Plague bacillus, smallpox and other historic diseases are also feared to soon re-emerge from the melting earth. The discovery earlier this summer of 46,000-year-old roundworms lying dormant in Siberia, which are happily reproducing once again, may hold clues for adapting to climate change — but they also raise questions about what else might venture forth in a thaw. And herein lies the **great lesson** of the far north, Professor Dodds explains: nothing here ever happens in isolation — there will be wider **ramifications** across the **globe**. "Change in the Arctic is never restricted to the Arctic itself," he says. "It is almost as if the Arctic strikes back."

The time is long gone where we could think of the Arctic as a great pristine wilderness. Instead it has become the burning crucible of our climate crisis. But, as the towering glaciers melt and the seas of the Earth's fifth largest ocean are revealed to us at last, their future looks even darker still, reanimating the **bio**logical threats of our deep past, and providing yet another site for human competition and **conquest**.

AT: Arctic Council Fails

The Arctic Council works– all countries are committed to collaboration & its framework is resilient and built to resolve disputes, even when tensions are high

Andreeva & Vigeland Rottem, Arctic researchers, 1/30/25

[Serafima, researcher at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Svein, Senior Researcher at Fridtjof Nansen Institute where he researches Arctic politics and the Arctic Council. He has published a number of peer reviewed articles and books on these issues., NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia, "How and Why the Arctic Council Survived Russia's Invasion of Ukraine", https://jordanrussiacenter.org/blog/how-and-why-the-arctic-council-survived-russias-invasion-of-ukraine, accessed 6/13/25]

On 3 March 2022, the seven Western Arctic states issued a joint statement condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and temporarily paused their activities within the Council. This disruption also found place in other fora like the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, from which Russia withdrew its participation, and the Council of the Baltic Sea States, from which Russia was suspended. The discussions within the Arctic Council at the political level were largely confidential, and did not always include permanent participants in decision-making processes.

In May 2022, Norway confirmed that it would proceed with preparations for its upcoming chairship period despite the ongoing pause. The following June, the "Arctic seven"—the western AC member states—issued a statement signaling partial resumption of AC work without Russian involvement.

This action attracted media attention, adding traction to debates about the Council's prospects, which seemed bleak at the time. The Arctic Circle Assembly in October 2022 was, however, a turning point. Among those closely involved with the Arctic Council, the approach had been to avoid public discussions about its survival to prevent further speculation as to the body's future. But after the Arctic Circle Assembly, leaders deemed it necessary to assert the Council's relevance and demonstrate the commitment of all Arctic states to its continued survival.

In November 2022, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov invited the Arctic states to a ministerial meeting to take place in May 2023. Norway accepted the invitation, signaling its desire for a smooth chairship transition and the continued existence of the Arctic Council. The transition of chairship from Russia and Norway was completed on 11 May 2023, despite challenges and the lack of in-person participation.

During the transition, Norway outlined its priorities, focusing on oceans, climate and environment, sustainable development, and the well-being of northern communities. Although Russia expressed conditioned skepticism to the upcoming Norwegian chairship period, particularly due to the potential influence of NATO in the Arctic Council—since, indeed, all AC member states except Russia were now NATO members—**it did not push for alternative multilateral platforms.**

After the transition, the body approved new guidelines for resuming scientific work within the Council's Working Groups. The collective efforts of the Arctic states, under Norwegian chairship, have been crucial in preserving the Council's role during this challenging period. Despite these gains, however, the future of the Arctic Council remains uncertain.

Why did the Arctic Council survive?

We define "survival" as the Arctic Council's ability to continue functioning, albeit to a limited extent, with all participating member states. **All member states have been kept engaged in ongoing activities to varying degrees, and all member states, including Russia, have expressed a desire to maintain cooperation.** This fact, however, does not guarantee the Council's future stability, much less immunity to external or internal challenges.

Legal framework

The legal framework of the Arctic Council is rooted in the 1996 Ottawa Declaration and the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), which emphasize consensus-based decision-making among member states. This framework deliberately avoids military security issues. The Council lacks the authority to impose sanctions, allowing its working groups to make clearer recommendations without the constraints of consensus-driven decision-making. These working groups, some of which predate the Council itself, have been instrumental in shaping international environmental policies.

Hence, the Arctic Council is more of a decision-shaping body than a decision-making one, providing a platform for non-state actors like indigenous communities to engage in international governance. Norway's chairship transition in 2023 was made possible through a combination of established procedural documents and the strategic plan for 2021–2030. This strategic reliance on existing frameworks enabled Norway to navigate diplomatic challenges, ensuring the Council's survival during a period of geopolitical instability. Yet procedural feasibility alone does not fully explain the Council's survival.

Strategic framework

Over recent decades, **global interest in the Arctic has surged, driven by the region's strategic importance and the growing need for international cooperation**. **The AC has played a central role in facilitating this interest, even during times of high geopolitical tensions. All AC member states agree that the Arctic Council is the main forum for multilateral cooperation in the Arctic in the relevant strategic documents.**

Moreover, the Arctic Council was created on the assumption that it would be possible to cooperate with Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the Council's founding agreement, the AEPS, was enabled through the Murmansk initiatives articulated by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987.

Foreign policy engagement

The Arctic Council has been a central arena for international cooperation in the region for several reasons. First, by promoting multilateral cooperation through the Council, Arctic states can counter expansionist ambitions from non-Arctic states and prevent conflict-driven narratives. The Council also serves as a barrier against the establishment of competing regimes, reinforcing the legitimacy of frameworks like the Law of the Sea Convention.

Furthermore, the Arctic Council's structure, which includes indigenous peoples' organizations as permanent participants, adds legitimacy and ensures diverse perspectives in decision-making. The Arctic Council's role in knowledge generation and its established networks have heightened global awareness of Arctic climate challenges, making its survival crucial for continued environmental collaboration.

Finally, **the Council's origins in the post-Cold War era and its role in maintaining regional stability underscore its importance.** The transition of chairmanship from Russia to Norway, coupled with the resumption of project-level work, illustrates the collective determination of the Arctic states to ensure the Council's continued existence, with an open-door policy for Russia's potential future re-engagement.

The Arctic Council works, but the CP is key to ramp up commitments and dialogue

Jacobsen & Vigeland-Rottem, Arctic researchers, 5/12/25

[Marc & Svein, Marc Jacobsen is an Associate Professor at the Royal Danish Defence College's Centre for Arctic Security Studies where he researches security politics and diplomacy in the Arctic. Marc was also a Member – in various positions – of The Arctic Institute between 2013 and 2020. He recently co-edited the book 'Greenland in Arctic Security' which is available via open access here. Svein Vigeland Rottem is a Senior Researcher at Fridtjof Nansen Institute where he researches Arctic politics and the Arctic Council. He has published a number of peer reviewed articles and books on these issues. He has also organized several events at conferences like Arctic Circle and Arctic Frontiers., Arctic Institute, "The Arctic Council in the Shadow of Geopolitics", https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/arctic-council-shadow-geopolitics/, accessed 6/13/25]

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 had a seismic effect on Arctic Council cooperation: The seven other member states decided to put their work in the Arctic Council on pause, and in the aftermath, Russia chose to withdraw from the Barents Euro-Arctic Council while threatening to do the same in the Arctic Council.

Since the pause in March 2022, cooperation has gradually been restarted: first in June 2022, when the working group projects without Russian participation – approximately 70 out of 140 – were resumed, and subsequently under the Norwegian chairship, when **there has been a steady increase** – though still limited – of interactions at the official level as well as the resumption of more substantial cooperation in the six working groups.

The new regional realities have also changed Russia's approach to China's Arctic ambitions. Whereas Moscow was previously skeptical about welcoming Beijing into Arctic governance, it is now more open and approachable. We have seen this concretely in increased economic cooperation, remarkable coast guard cooperation and joint statements from Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin about wanting to strengthen cooperation in the Arctic.

If we look to the west, there are also dark clouds on the horizon, which portend another challenge for the Arctic Council: Donald Trump's USA. During President Trump's first term, we saw how then-Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, spoke harshly against China and Russia, and did not share the other member states' view that human activities are the main driver behind climate change and pose an existential threat. This resulted in the Finnish chairship failing to conclude a joint declaration in 2019, which was the first time in the history of the Arctic Council.

Donald Trump's persistent interest in Greenland may also prove to be a serious challenge for the chairship during the next two years. While the threat, on the one hand, may bring Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands closer together, there is also an

increased risk of American attempts to create discord in the realm. Thus, Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands are under a historically high cross-pressure, which transforms the chairship from being a big task to an enormous one.

The need for increased council activity

Norway's chairship in 2023-2025 has managed to balance the situation and keep the council alive by gradually ramping up its activities. For the Danish, Greenlandic and Faroese chairship to be a success, it would be wise to continue on the same path with steadily increasing activity to ensure that the council's pulse continues to beat. However, the fact that the threat now both comes from the east and the west makes the balancing act historically difficult.

One opportunity for increasing activity is to further enhance the focus on the rights of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic – which the new chairship program, indeed, prioritizes – in order to strengthen regional cooperation without necessarily having to compromise on condemning Russia. If the situation allows, something as ambitious as a binding agreement on increased protection of Indigenous peoples' rights in the Arctic would be worth striving for, similar to the council's three existing agreements on aeronautical and maritime search and rescue (2011), marine oil pollution preparedness and response (2013), and enhancing international Arctic scientific cooperation (2017).

It may not sound like something Trump would want a stake in, but there is a chance that the Arctic Council does not have his attention whatsoever due to its limited activity – and because there are plenty of other things that keep him occupied. If that is the case, it may actually prove to be an advantage for the Arctic Council, which under normal circumstances would otherwise strengthen its relevance if meetings were prioritized by the highest political level. However, its current fragile existence and the crucial challenges make increased activity and regional consensus the overriding success criteria. In this light, it may be beneficial if State Secretary Marco Rubio is not at the table.

The chairship's level of ambition is therefore closely linked to how relations with Russia in the east and the US in the west unfold in the coming period, and here it is extra important that the other member states stand together. Only in this way can we ensure that the Arctic Council continues to exist so that regional environmental problems and sustainable development are not overshadowed by military rumble and great power competition.

The Arctic Council is still functioning – all countries are committed to collaboration but increased engagement is needed

Andreeva & Vigeland Rottem, Arctic researchers, 1/30/25

[Serafima, researcher at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Svein, Senior Researcher at Fridtjof Nansen Institute where he researches Arctic politics and the Arctic Council. He has published a number of peer reviewed articles and books on these issues., NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia, "How and Why the Arctic Council Survived Russia's Invasion of Ukraine", https://jordanrussiacenter.org/blog/how-and-why-the-arctic-council-survived-russias-invasion-of-ukraine, accessed 6/13/25]

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Arctic Council is alive but action is needed – new engagement through the CP bolsters its credibility

Simpson, freelance climate and human rights journalist, 23

Brett, 2024-2026 Institute of Current World Affairs fellow based in Tromsø, Norway., 5/31/23, Foreign Policy, "The Rise and Sudden Fall of the Arctic Council", https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/05/31/arctic-council-russia-norway/, accessed via NexisUni, accessed 6/13/25]

Still, by cooperating in the May 11 meeting, Russia signaled at least some investment in the council's survival. And it took what Hoglund called a **'powerful step forward'**: After the meeting, **the council released a joint declaration signed by all members, including Russian senior Arctic official Nikolay Korchunov.**

'We wanted to give the message that **the Arctic Council is not dead, it's still here, and we want to make it relevant again,'** Hoglund said.

A declaration of life seems all the council can currently muster. Volker Rachold, director of the German Arctic Office, called this year's joint declaration 'highly unusual.' Typically, after the standard affirmation of the council's purpose, the declaration outlines goals and new projects for the next two years. This year, he said, the statement was notably sparse.

'After the usual opening remarks, it just seemed to stop,' Rachold said. 'I thought I was missing pages.'

Rottem believes that, for now, Norway has a lot to gain from staying vague. Any fanfare or strong statement, he said, threatens a more formal fracture. Starting new projects would force hard questions about how to treat the consensus vote. But the small Nordic nation, which shares a land border with Russia, is well-practiced in walking a fine diplomatic line with its neighbor. For now, by moving slowly and staying light on details, it may just keep the past 30 years of work afloat.

In June, Arctic Council leaders will meet again—this time without Russia—to discuss a potential path forward. Hoglund said that he hopes to have a sense of next steps by the end of the summer, but it's no hard deadline. Generally, he said, those eager to see the work of the Arctic Council resume at full strength will be disappointed.

'We're not here ringing a bell to say we're back; we're focused on taking it step by step,' Hoglund said. **'If cooperation breaks down completely, it will be so much harder to rebuild it from scratch.'**

Aff Answers

Perm

Perm do both

The U.S. federal government should both implement the plan and pursue the Arctic Council process described in the counterplan. Consultation doesn't require deferring action- the U.S. can still pursue its plan while engaging in diplomatic and multilateral discussions

Perm do the plan then the counterplan

The U.S. should implement the plan and then request an Arctic Council advisory opinion on its broader Arctic policy. The plan is too important to delay, and it is not going to make it impossible to re-engage with the Arctic Council later. We still get all of the benefits of re-engaging with the Arctic Council without the risk of them being the gatekeepers to this plan. Multilateral input is good, but we don't want the AC blocking urgent action.

Perm- Consultation Only

The U.S. should seek the Council's advisory opinion but should not make its actions contingent on the recommendation. The CP locks the U.S. into complying with the Council. This gives up sovereignty or flexibility and is unnecessary when the U.S. can still listen and cooperate diplomatically. Engagement is the solvency mechanism, not blind compliance.

Solvency/ Arctic Council Fails

Arctic Council fails – new projects like the CP doom it to infighting – their authors agree

Simpson, freelance climate and human rights journalist, 23

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The Arctic Council is cooked – Trump, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and distrust zero CP solvency

Coffey, Hudson Institute senior fellow, 5/16/25

[Luke, Arab News, "How a big freeze descended on the Arctic Council", https://www.arabnews.com/node/2601027, accessed 6/13/25]

With much of the world's attention focused on US President Donald Trump's historic visit to the Middle East or the fluctuating progress of talks between Russia and Ukraine, a quiet but consequential event took place last week that largely escaped notice.

In Norway, relatively low-level officials gathered for a closed-door ceremony to mark the transfer of the Arctic Council's two-year rotating chairmanship from Norway to Denmark. This may seem mundane. In fact it was an important moment for one of the world's few remaining forums where East and West, until recently, found ways to cooperate.

The council, established in 1996, brings together the eight Arctic states — Canada, Denmark (through Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US — to collaborate on non-military issues. For years, it functioned effectively by focusing on practical, low-conflict areas such as environmental protection, search and rescue coordination, and oil spill response.

This pragmatic approach allowed the council to thrive, even during periods of broader geopolitical tension. Crucially, it also includes six indigenous organizations as permanent participants, giving the peoples who live in the Arctic a direct voice in shaping its future. Observer states, including faraway Singapore and major players such as China, contribute expertise and funding, but have no vote.

This system worked — until it didn't.

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022 shattered many channels of cooperation between Moscow and the West, including the Arctic Council. Although Russia handed over the chairmanship to Norway in May of that year, the customary fanfare was noticeably absent. **Over the past two years Norway has tried to keep the council afloat, but the breakdown in relations with Russia rendered it largely ineffective.** By the time Norway passed the chairmanship to Denmark, the best that could be said was that the council still existed.

Complicating matters further are suggestions by **Trump that the US might seek to annex Greenland and an unwillingness to rule out military force to do so, which have alarmed NATO allies and unsettled the Arctic Council's delicate balance.** That may explain why it was Greenland's foreign minister, rather than a Danish official, who accepted the chairmanship on Denmark's behalf. How this tension between the US and Denmark plays out within the council remains to be seen, but **it will not make cooperation any easier.**

With the council unable to conduct substantial work, its immediate goal is simply to survive. Should a ceasefire or peace agreement be reached in Ukraine, some might push to quickly revive the council, but they would face serious headwinds. Since 2022, the Arctic security landscape has changed profoundly. Norway's newly released national security strategy describes its situation as "the most serious ... our country has faced since the Second World War."

Finland and Sweden, previously militarily non-aligned, have joined NATO, placing seven of the eight Arctic states under the same security umbrella. Their accession to the alliance would have been unimaginable before Russia's invasion. The new Canadian government is expanding its presence in the Arctic, for geopolitical reasons that are unlikely to disappear anytime soon: **Russia's actions in Ukraine have left deep scars.**

This evolving environment also affects non-Arctic states seeking a larger role in the region. China, for example, has been one of the major losers of the Arctic Council's dysfunction. Beijing used the forum to expand influence in polar affairs. With the council no longer functioning as it once did, China has lost a key international venue. In response, Russia and China have deepened their cooperation in the Arctic, particularly on energy and infrastructure projects, driven partly by Western sanctions.

If the Arctic Council does eventually resume full operations, expect China to re-engage quickly to regain lost ground.

Another unresolved challenge concerns indigenous representation. Among the six permanent indigenous participants is the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North. However, many indigenous Russians have fled the country and formed exile organizations, such as the International Committee of Indigenous Peoples of Russia. These groups seek a seat at the Arctic Council table, but so far no effort has been made to include them. Moscow would undoubtedly veto any attempt to do so. If the council hopes to rebuild credibility, it cannot return to business as usual while excluding exiled indigenous voices. Navigating this will be tricky, but necessary.

Has the damage to trust between Russia and its Arctic neighbors gone too far for the council to recover? It's too early to say, **but it cannot be ruled out.**

Also, that the Arctic is thousands of kilometers from the Middle East doesn't mean it's irrelevant to this region. With key shipping lanes in the Red Sea threatened by Houthi attacks and piracy concerns persisting off the Horn of Africa, global shipping companies are eyeing new trade routes between Asia and Europe. Depending on how rapidly Arctic ice continues to melt, northern sea routes may become increasingly viable.

Moreover, scientific research in the Arctic — especially on climate and environmental change — is of global importance. Countries such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia have already shown interest in Arctic research and investment. Both have sent delegations to Arctic conferences and expressed willingness to fund scientific initiatives. As the region becomes more accessible and geopolitically important, Arab engagement is likely to grow.

What happens in the Arctic is often shaped by geopolitical currents elsewhere, and increasingly what happens in the Arctic has consequences across the globe. While the headlines may focus on more immediate crises, the Arctic deserves attention. We ignore it at our peril.

Arctic Council can't solve Arctic War… or anything else!

Huebert, University of Calgary political science professor, 3/3/25

[Rob, ArcticToday,"Can the Arctic Council survive the Trump administration? Probably not. Here's why",

https://www.arctictoday.com/can-the-arctic-council-survive-the-trump-administration-probably-not-heres-why/, accessed 6/13/25]

The havoc caused by the new American administration has been devastating on a wide range of fronts. We are quite possibly witnessing the end of the western rules-based international order that has lasted since the end of World War II.

While Trump's attention hasn't yet shifted to the Arctic Council, it **should be apparent to all that this is just a matter of time. When he does, the outcomes will be devastating.** He will probably take three steps that will combine to **either gut the key works of the Council, or possibly end it altogether.**

First, Trump's elimination of international aid demonstrates his policy of selfish isolationism. His decision to stop much of the assistance provided under the USAID program shows that he has no inclination to understand the benefits of a cooperative multilateral system, or a desire to continue a policy that every U.S. president since Kennedy has supported.

In addition, he has openly criticized NATO and the ICC, along with many of the U.S. economic agreements with other nations. In both his first term and now his second, Trump has shown a clear lack of support for international organizations and multilateral agreements. Specifically, he seems intent on either ending American participation or upending the agreements solely for American benefit.

Trump has already demonstrated that even if he doesn't withdraw from the Arctic Council, he would actively gut some of the most important achievements in line with his own goals. First, he doesn't "believe" in climate change. During Trump's first term, the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Rovaniemi in 2019 failed to produce a final declaration for the first time since the organization was created. This was because the U.S. delegation – under the leadership of Secretary of States Mike Pompeo – objected to the term "climate change" or any reference to the Paris Accord. There is nothing to suggest that the American position on climate change will be altered. If anything, it will probably get more strident.

Reshaping Society

Trump has also moved quickly to end American programs that are in any way associated with the issues surrounding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). It is highly unlikely that as part of this process to reshape American society, his administration would support any of the important initiatives supporting the northern Indigenous Peoples under the Arctic Council. His administration has had no qualms about ending the support that the U.S. had provided to the developing world, so he will almost certainly be unwilling to continue to provide any support of the Permanent Participants or any of the Arctic Council programs that support them.

Third, **Trump has directly attacked two of the core state members of the Arctic Council.** Since his second term began, he has repeatedly threatened to "take over" both Greenland and Canada. While some at first thought he was just joking, Trump has continued to say that these are his intentions. He has begun to take active steps, through the threats of a trade war to critically weaken Canada in order to make it more amendable to "joining" the U.S. Again, even if he doesn't move to directly destroy the Arctic Council, how could Canada and Denmark work with the U.S., knowing that the Americans are actively moving to weaken or even cripple them as a state?

Fourth, the one Arctic state that Trump has attempted to improve relations with – Russia – remains also problematic for the Arctic Council. Trump's effort to work with Russia will make the existing issues that the Arctic Council had with Russia even more difficult. Trump has already called for the

Russians to be readmitted to the G-7. If he doesn't move to end the Arctic Council, he will undoubtedly call for any sanctions against Russia to be eliminated and for the country to be fully integrated.

At the same time he is actively moving to directly be involved in assisting Russia to complete its conquest of Ukraine. In a move that is reminiscent of the conquest of Czechoslovakia through the capitulation of the U.K. and France to Germany in 1938, Trump has begun direct negotiations with Russia without the involvement of the Ukrainians. Putin now knows that it has the support of Trump.

As a result, there is every reason to believe that Russia will continue with its acts of aggression against its neighbours. This includes both Sweden and Finland, who both chose to join NATO. Putin has always made it clear that it was the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO that was one of the reasons for his decision to launch his war of aggression against Ukraine in 2014.

Scorched Earth Policy

Ultimately, this means that the Arctic Council now faces two terrible scenarios. The first is that in his scorched earth policy toward multilateralism, Trump will either move to end the Arctic Council or at least remove the U.S. as a member. He may also carry out his threat to ensure that both Canada and Denmark also cease to be meaningful members of the Arctic Council. If he truly does intend to take over Canada, it won't even be a state. Even if he only means to weaken and reduce Canada to a vassal state, its ability to participate will be damaged – if not eliminated.

Likewise, if the U.S. takes over Greenland, Denmark's main rational for being a member of the Arctic Council will be eliminated. Assuming that somehow the Arctic Council survives an American withdrawal, and the U.S. follows up its threats to control Greenland and Canada, the Council would have only the active membership of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland.

Even if the U.S. remains in the Arctic Council, its current actions means the gutting of some of its most important missions, The U.S. won't support actions to eliminate the causes of climate change, and it is very unlikely to support the Permanent Participants. Outside of the Council, perhaps the Coast Guard forum will continue. But even here Trump is having an impact. **He has already fired Admiral Linda Pagan, the Commandant of the USCG.** American officials have suggested it was because of her commitment to DEI policies.

Even more dangerously, this variant of the Arctic Council would include a U.S. whose policies are now at complete odds with the previous actions of the Arctic Council. It would also include a Denmark that has either lost Greenland to the U.S. or will need to take action to prevent this. It will include a Canada that is being continually weakened by American action, and is either actively trying to stop an American takeover or has become a vassal state to the U.S. It will also include a Russia that is being increasingly supported by the U.S. and has been given the right of conquest over Ukraine. Furthermore, if Ukraine was conquered for considering joining NATO, the future of both Finland and Sweden (which did actually join NATO) will undoubtedly be even more problematic for Russia.

These are dire times for the Arctic Council. It is hard to think of a way to maintain its many successes in supporting an understanding of the impact of climate change on the Arctic. It has also played an important role in supporting a greater awareness of the northern Indigenous Peoples in the region. And perhaps most importantly, it has served as the principal means of promoting a peaceful and harmonious international regime of cooperation.

All of this is now at risk. Perhaps Trump won't think that the Arctic Council is worth his attention, and it can somehow remain under the American radar until the next presidential election. But as many have said in the past, hope is not a strategy.

NATO-Russia tensions over Ukraine make Arctic Council cooperation impossible.

Alina **Bykova 24**. Senior Associate at The Arctic Institute. "NATO has always been an Arctic Alliance (Part II)." Arctic Institute - Center for Circumpolar Security Studies. 6-11-2024. https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/nato-arctic-alliance-part-ii/

Despite growing tension between **Russia** and the **West throughout the 2000s**, not even NATO enlargement into the Baltics and Balkans in 2004 and 2009, the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008, its military intervention in Syria, and the annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula in 2014 could shake the relative stability of Arctic relations.12) While Europe was in crisis following Russia's incursion into Ukrainian territory, the members of the Arctic Council maintained good relations and cooperation continued in various regional organizations throughout the north. Some joint military exercises between NATO states and Russia were cancelled, but the tradition of Arctic exceptionalism continued mostly unaffected under the well-known adage of "High North, low tension."13)

The **watershed moment** came in February 2022, when **Russia launched a full-scale invasion against Ukraine**. In the months that followed, the Arctic Council members issued a statement that they **would pause work** with **Russia**,14) and Sweden and Finland **negated decades** of **neutrality** policy when they petitioned to **become NATO members**.15) Finland was admitted to the Alliance in April 2023, followed by Sweden in March 2024, making seven out of eight Arctic states NATO members.

Russia's latest unprovoked **violence** in **Ukraine** has irreparably changed the **security landscape** of both **Europe** and the **Arctic**.16) The breakdown of relations has **been far-reaching**, affecting everything from major intergovernmental bodies such as the Arctic Council and regional partnerships such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), which Russia dropped out of in September 2023 after stating that **Western hostility** was to **blame** for the **lack of cooperation**.17) Arctic Indigenous groups have reported difficulties in carrying out ongoing initiatives to strengthen Indigenous rights and monitor environmental problems in the north after the fracture of relations between **Russia** and the **West**.18) Yet Russia remains a formidable force in the north, with jurisdiction over 53 percent of the Arctic coastline. Contrary to what some journalists have argued, Russia has not "lost the Arctic to NATO,"19) considering that the Russian Arctic is the most populated and industrialized northern region in the world, and that it has a substantial head start on Arctic military build-up and navigation compared to most other Arctic states.20) Russia also significantly outnumbers NATO in terms of military bases in the Arctic.

Structural issues prevent effective Council action.

Heather **Exner-Pirot 19**. Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Calgary, fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre, et al., 2/5/2019, "Form and Function: The Future of the Arctic Council." https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/form-function-future-arctic-council/

Although the **Arctic Council** has a good foundation, it is **constrained** in **significant ways**. The first of these is **funding**. While the Arctic Council Secretariat seems adequately funded (1.24 million USD in 2017, with Norway contributing half), it has **very little discretionary funding**. Similarly, the **Working Groups** rely on one or two states to fund a secretariat but have **limited** ongoing project funds. Almost all activities are funded on an ad hoc basis by the states who advocated for them and by individual experts who secure their own funding through national channels. Thus, all too often it is funding that drives projects, **not** projects that drive funding. This makes it **difficult** to be strategic with planning, or to organize **new activities** beyond a **one or two year window**. Moreover, funding to support the capacity and participation of Permanent Participants is a constant source of concern. The establishment of the widely publicized Álgu Fund, conceptualized as a "capacity-building endowment" has not been successful in addressing this challenge as of yet.

While the Arctic Council has made good progress on becoming more transparent in recent years through its open access archive, it still **struggles** to be **accountable** to stakeholders, northerners, and taxpayers. This is **not** for lack of **effort**, but **due to its structure**. It has a **voluntary character**, which prevents **binding commitments**. Ministerial Declarations contain many subjective statements that are difficult to account for, and no formal

efforts are made to assess them. A tracking tool, the Amarok, has been established to document life cycle phases of various projects and initiatives, but there are no resources to systematically measure progress on outcomes, value for money/effort, or implementation, or to provide ongoing monitoring.

AT: Net Benefit

Trump makes US exercise of leadership through the Arctic Council impossible.

Rob **Huebert 25.** Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Calgary. He also is the interim director of the Centre for Military, Security and Strategic Studies. "Can the Arctic Council survive the Trump administration? Probably not. Here's why." ArcticToday. 3-3-2025. https://www.arctictoday.com/can-the-arctic-council-survive-the-trump-administration-probably-not-heres-why/

Scorched Earth Policy

Ultimately, this means that the Arctic Council now faces **two terrible scenarios**. The first is that in his scorched earth policy **toward multilateralism**, Trump will either move to end the Arctic Council or at least **remove** the **U.S. as a member**. He may also carry out his threat to ensure that both Canada and Denmark also cease to be **meaningful members** of the **Arctic Council**. If he truly does intend to take over Canada, it won't even be a state. Even if he only means to weaken and reduce Canada to a vassal state, its ability to participate will be **damaged** – **if not eliminated.**

Likewise, if the U.S. takes over Greenland, Denmark's main rational for being a member of the Arctic Council will be eliminated. Assuming that somehow the Arctic Council **survives** an **American withdrawal**, and the U.S. follows up its threats to control **Greenland** and **Canada**, the Council would have only the active membership of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland.

Even if the U.S. **remains** in the **Arctic Council**, its current actions means the gutting of some of its most important missions. The U.S. won't support actions to eliminate the **causes** of **climate change**, and it is very unlikely to support the Permanent Participants. Outside of the Council, perhaps the Coast Guard forum will continue. But even here Trump is having an impact. He has already fired Admiral Linda Pagan, the Commandant of the USCG. American officials have suggested it was because of her commitment to DEI policies.

Even more dangerously, this variant of the Arctic Council would include a U.S. whose policies are now at complete odds with the previous actions of the Arctic Council. It would also include a Denmark that has either lost Greenland to the U.S. or will need to **take action** to **prevent this**. It will include a Canada that is being continually weakened by American action, and is either actively trying to stop an American takeover or has become a vassal state to the U.S. It will also include a Russia that is being **increasingly supported** by **the U.S.** and has been given the right of conquest over Ukraine. Furthermore, if Ukraine was conquered for considering joining NATO, the future of both **Finland** and **Sweden** (which did actually join NATO) will undoubtedly be **even more problematic** for **Russia**.

These are **dire times** for the **Arctic Council**. It is hard to think of a way to maintain its many successes in supporting an understanding of the impact of climate change on the Arctic. It has also played an important role in supporting a greater awareness of the northern Indigenous Peoples in the region. And perhaps most importantly, it has served as the principal means of promoting a peaceful and harmonious international regime of cooperation.

All of this is now at risk. Perhaps **Trump** won't think that the Arctic Council is worth his attention, and it can **somehow remain** under the **American radar** until the next **presidential election**. But as many have said in the past, **hope is not a strategy**.

The US can't rebuild Arctic Council credibility. Other countries like Denmark are key.

Marc **Jacobsen &** Svein Vigeland **Rottem 25**. *Associate Professor at the Royal Danish Defence College's Centre for Arctic Security Studies where he researches security politics and diplomacy in the Arctic; **Senior Researcher at Fridtjof Nansen Institute. "The Arctic Council in the Shadow of Geopolitics." Arctic Institute - Center for Circumpolar Security Studies. 5-12-2025. https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/arctic-council-shadow-geopolitics/

The need for increased council activity

Norway's chairship in 2023-2025 has managed to balance the situation and keep the **council alive** by **gradually ramping up its activities**. For the **Danish**, **Greenlandic** and **Faroese** chairship to be a **success**, it would be wise to continue on the **same path** with steadily **increasing activity** to ensure that the **council's pulse continues to** beat. However, the fact that the **threat** now both comes from the **east** and the **west** makes the **balancing act historically difficult**.

One opportunity for increasing activity is to further enhance the focus on the rights of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic – which the new chairship program, indeed, prioritizes – in order to strengthen regional cooperation without necessarily having to compromise on condemning Russia. If the situation allows, something as ambitious as a binding agreement on increased protection of Indigenous peoples' rights in the Arctic would be worth striving for, similar to the council's three existing agreements on aeronautical and maritime search and rescue (2011), marine oil pollution preparedness and response (2013), and enhancing international Arctic scientific cooperation (2017).

It may not sound like something Trump would want a stake in, but there is a chance that the Arctic Council does not have his attention whatsoever due to its limited activity – and because there are plenty of other things that keep him occupied. If that is the case, it may actually prove to be an advantage for the Arctic Council, which under normal circumstances would otherwise strengthen its relevance if meetings were prioritized by the highest political level. However, its current fragile existence and the crucial challenges make increased activity and regional consensus the overriding success criteria. In this light, it may be beneficial if State Secretary Marco Rubio is not at the table.

The chairship's level of ambition is therefore closely linked to how relations with Russia in the east and the US in the west unfold in the coming period, and here it is extra important that the other member states stand together. Only in this way can we ensure that the Arctic Council continues to exist so that regional environmental problems and sustainable development are not overshadowed by military rumble and great power competition.

Have Nuuk, Copenhagen and Tórshavn buried the hatchet?

Whereas Russia's role has been a ubiquitous topic in the Arctic political discourse, the internal dynamics between Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands have also played a major role in the debate about their common chairship.

Two topics have especially influenced this debate: First, there has been disagreement between Tórshavn and Nuuk about whether the Faroe Islands' self-characterization as 'an Arctic people' is an indirect attack on Greenland's national identity and privileged negotiating position in the Arctic. Second, Greenland has actively used the fact that Denmark's status as an Arctic state depends on Greenland's geographical location and membership of the Realm to expand its foreign policy room for manoeuvre. With this in mind, Greenland's leading diplomats have long worked for Greenland to be the lead dog in the joint delegation to the Arctic Council.

Their work eventually resulted in a new agreement ensuring that the Kingdom of Denmark's Arctic Ambassador is now the Greenlandic career diplomat, Kenneth Høegh, who comes directly from a position as Head of Greenland's representation in Washington D.C. During the two-year chairship, Høegh will have offices in both Nuuk and Copenhagen, while he will be chair of the eight national Senior Arctic Officials (SAO). The Faroe Islands' Gunvør Balle is vice chair, while Denmark's Torsten Kjølby Nielsen is the Kingdom of Denmark's national Senior Arctic Official.

After many years of tug-of-war, it now seems that **Denmark**, Greenland and the Faroe Islands have buried the hatchet regarding the division of roles during the chairship, with Greenland now occupying a very prominent role. This is important both in

the short term – where they **must ensure** a **successful chairship** – and in the long term, where it is about the overarching mission of **making sure that the Arctic Council survives.**

Three reasons why the Arctic Council must survive

There are many good reasons why the Arctic Council should survive. Here we will highlight three:

First, the involvement of Indigenous peoples as permanent participants in the council is unique in an international context. They do not have direct decision-making authority, but they are at the table and provide input – and are heard – when decisions are made. If the Arctic Council does not survive, this unique construct will fall apart, which will create a major challenge for Arctic Indigenous peoples, who are unlikely to gain the same kind of influence in another regional forum.

Second, the Arctic Council's working groups are a unique construct: Over three decades, scientists and officials have accumulated knowledge that has been incorporated into national administration and international convention work. This work has thus helped to make the rest of the world aware of the enormous climatic and environmental challenges that are extraordinarily noticeable in the Arctic, well exemplified by the average regional temperature increase which is about three times higher than the global average. Thus, the scientific work under the auspices of the Arctic Council is not only important for the region, but for the globe at large. If the Arctic Council does not survive the current crisis, these essential networks will likely collapse, and they cannot be rebuilt overnight.

The third, and related, reason is that the Arctic states and the other actors of the Council face major transboundary challenges that are best solved jointly. Be it biodiversity issues, the spread of diseases and environmental problems; the risk of the latter is only increasing in step with the heightened activities in the region.

Our inevitable shared fate in the North

At the moment, it is of course politically and morally difficult to **cooperate** with **Russia**, while the Trump administration's **approach** to **Greenland** – and the Arctic experiences from his first presidential term – provide negative evidence of what further consequences this could **have for regional cooperation**.

The Arctic Council is in a **historically difficult situation**, marked by geopolitical shadows from both the East and the West. An extraordinary responsibility therefore rests **on the other Arctic states** – led by the new chairship – to **ensure** that they **together address our inevitable shared fate** in the **North**. If successful, the **Arctic Council** could emerge **stronger on the other side**.

The Arctic Council is not key to Arctic cooperation.

Trine **Jonassen 24**. Reporter for High North News. ""“Without Russia, the Arctic Council Will Not Survive”." High North News. 2-1-2024. https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/without-russia-arctic-council-will-not-survive

Half of the Arctic

"I think the working groups would still be alive and kicking. But we must acknowledge that half of the Arctic is Russian, and the Arctic Council is a product of the end of the Cold War and is all **about circumpolar cooperation**. So, if that happens, the Arctic Council will be dead letters".

"Or it becomes something else, like the Barents cooperation, which has become a Nordic cooperation now without Russia," suggests Solveig Rossebø.

But a great loss it would be still, so the Norwegian chairship is hard at work to keep all eight states in the Council.

Even if the Arctic Council were to evaporate, the Arctic issues would not go away and would still have to be solved.

"The **Arctic cooperation would not be dead even if the Arctic Council would be**," Rottem states.

No chance of Arctic conflict.

Anna **Valberg 24**. M.A. in Political Science, University of Oslo; Head of communications, Fridtjof Nansen Institute. "War in the Arctic? Researchers debunk three myths about the High North." https://partner.sciencenorway.no/arctic-climate-conflict/war-in-the-arctic-researchers-debunk-three-myths-about-the-high-north/2314629

But Østhagen believes there are **three major misconceptions** about **geopolitics in the Arctic**:

The first is the **possibility of war** in the Arctic. The second is that there are **unresolved borders** in the Arctic and that a **resource race** is underway. The third is that climate change is the **primary catalyst** for **all changes** in the Arctic region.

"The reality is **much calmer**," Østhagen says.

"The Electron case illustrates well everything that can go wrong. But it also shows why things usually dont go wrong. There's a **willingness to cooperate**," Svein Vigeland Rottem says.

He is a senior researcher at FNI and studies cooperation in the Arctic. Rottem and Østhagen do not agree that the Arctic is a powder keg and a dangerous place, as recently stated by Lars Saunes, former head of the Norwegian Navy, to Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation NRK.

Myth 1: The **possibility of war** in the Arctic

Østhagen, addressing the misconception of imminent war in the Arctic, explains that the conditions in the Arctic are often **more stable** and **transparent** than **many assume**.

Conflict is not **easily triggered**, considering the **vast areas** and **diverse countries** involved. Østhagen emphasises the enormity of the Arctic, which encompasses eight countries, four million people, and extensive ocean areas. The countries include Russia, the Nordic states, the USA, and Canada.

He notes that the significant Russian presence – with almost half of the Arctic landmass under Russian control – influences perceptions of geopolitics in the North.

Iver B. Neumann, a Russia researcher and director at the FNI, concurs that the Arctic is less likely to witness armed conflict than **other global locations**.

He believes the primary driver for military conflict in the Arctic is Russia's use of Murmansk as a base for nuclear weapons.

"There are three main ways to keep such weapons mobile: in aircraft, on land by rail, and at sea on submarines. Where such submarines exist, as in Murmansk, there is also significant military attention. And where there is military attention, there is also the potential for conflict," he says.

Neumann advises caution in responding to Russia's desire for global attention and military control, stressing the importance of Norway maintaining a cool head, enforcing sovereignty, and not succumbing to intimidation.

Myth 2: Unresolved borders and a race for resources

As the Arctic becomes more accessible due to melting sea ice because of climate change, a **common myth** suggests a **scramble for resources** and land in the North will occur.

But Østhagen clarifies that, unlike in other parts of the world, there are almost **no disputes** over Arctic borders.

"All the **borders are settled**," he says, noting that the last conflict between Canada and Greenland was resolved in 2022.

Maritime boundaries are key for resource management and potential conflict. Law of the sea grants coastal states **sovereign rights** for **resource exploitation** in their **economic zones**.

In the Arctic, only one maritime boundary remains unresolve. It is between the USA and Canada – two close allies.

Østhagen, who wrote his PhD on maritime disputes, foresees no **major concerns** regarding sovereignty or territorial issues. He believes the myth persists due to historical reasons but emphasises that, with all the land borders settled and just one disputed sea border, Arctic resources are already distributed among the eight Arctic states.

Myth 3: Climate change drives **all shifts** in the Arctic

A third myth suggests that climate change is the **main driver** for **all political shifts** in the Arctic.

But Østhagen cautions against **oversimplifying** the issue, noting that while climate change does affect fish migration – leading to potential future conflicts around resource-rich areas like Svalbard – it's important to be specific about which aspects of climate change increase conflict risks.

No escalation in the Arctic.

Tomáš **Vlček et al. 24**. Ph.D.; Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations and European Studies, Masaryk University. Other Contributors: Martin Chovančík, Kateřina Uhlířová & Martin Jirušek. "Strained Relations in the High North: Steps-to-War Analysis of Conflict Potential in the Arctic." Europe-Asia Studies, Volume 76, Issue 3.

Thus, while the research clearly shows a rise in conflict potential, critically, the rivalry factor has not increased. In other words, **none of the actors** in the examined region has an **interest** in **escalating confrontational behaviour**. While the military presence is growing in the Arctic, this growth has not diverged drastically from the previous trend. Even on the worsened geopolitical playing field after February 2022, **communication channels** have not been interrupted, and the rivalry indicators **clearly show** cooperative behaviour among the actors, including **indications of efforts** to **continue in this manner**.

Since 2014, defence spending has risen. There have been **frequent rhetorical confrontations**, and the undisputable military build-up by Russia and the other Arctic states has increased. Overall, international tensions have risen. Nevertheless, the actors in the Arctic have shown **stability and adherence** to the regime of **regional cooperation institutions** and treaties. On the other hand, one might argue that increased militarisation, which takes the most time of all factors and requires the most investment to change, may indicate that the other factors in STWM could also change easily and quickly. This is confirmed by a rapid change in coalition-building after February 2022. However, the evidence so far leaves the **non-escalating rivalry factor** as **a highly relevant counterbalance** to **increased militarisation** and negative trends in coalition-building. In short, the rivalry factor is **strong enough** to offset and even **detract** from the tensions caused by developments in militarisation and coalition-building.

Placing this research within a larger international context, the prioritisation of the Arctic among the key players has decreased at the expense of developments in Eastern Europe and the world energy crisis. The **enduring world economic crisis** in the wake of the **COVID-19 pandemic** and the **invasion of Ukraine** reduces the desire for an **escalation of another conflict** in the Arctic. It is thus expected that the Arctic countries will adhere to non-confrontational behaviour. It is also questionable whether these countries can sustain their planned **Arctic-specific military spending** under the **current economic situation** and **more pressing issues** elsewhere on the international scene. Hence, all these phenomena further support the idea that the rivalry factor will **continue to support** non-escalation in the region.

The evidence also reveals Russian activities as the catalyst of recent military developments, and that confrontational behaviour in the military dimension pits Russia against the other seven Arctic countries. In this regard, further research as to if and under what conditions the Arctic could be a future sphere of new Russian military activities would be valuable. Russian interests in the Arctic, its military developments after 2014, and the actual reasons for these activities are key topics for further debate. Yet, despite the clearly increased tensions between Russia and the West since 2014, we have seen **persistent rhetoric** underlining **cooperation** and **joint dispute settlement** in the High North and agendas setting cooperative goals for respective coalitions. Thus, the coalition regime under which cooperation in the Arctic takes place **appears stable** for the time being.

No Arctic war----a decade of stability proves.

Robert D. **English 20**. IR Professor at USC, Ph.D. in politics from Princeton University, worked in the US Department of Defense from 1982 to 1986 and the Committee for National Security between 1986 and 1988, taught as an assistant professor at the Bologna Center in the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Relations, "Why an Arctic arms race would be a mistake", https://www.arctictoday.com/why-an-arctic-arms-race-would-be-a-mistake/

Most of America's **historic foreign policy blunders** were driven by **threat inflation**. From **fake attacks on ships in Havana Harbor** or **the Gulf of Tonkin**, to **falling dominos** in Southeast Asia and **WMD in Iraq** — the response to these "dire threats" is often a **costly quagmire**. In the Cold War it was phony bomber and missile "gaps" that sparked a precarious and ultimately pointless nuclear confrontation. Today a new "icebreaker gap" could fuel an **Arctic arms race. For over a decade**, **defense hawks** have been **sounding the alarm** about Russia's supposed **"militarization"** and **"dominance"** of the Arctic. More recently, **China** has joined the list of **"aggressors"** allegedly threatening vital Western economic and strategic interests in the High North. The Obama administration resisted calls for a major Arctic buildup coming from a mix of armchair analysts, defense contractors, and special political interests. Notably, the U.S. Navy has never joined this chorus. Nobody denies the need for some new heavy icebreakers to buttress an aging fleet, but these are for Coast Guard missions — not the remote warfighting scenarios hyped by Arctic hawks. **Theirs is classic threat inflation**, built on equal parts **exaggeration** and **ignorance**, that makes it irresistible to a Trump administration happy to overturn yet another Obama legacy. And so, with a recent series of provocative words and deeds, America's Arctic policy has taken an abruptly belligerent turn. This is another historic mistake, not only because it could lead to costly and dangerous confrontation in an extremely fragile region, but because **its entire premise is false**. Once a superpower rival in the High North, Russia's Arctic presence imploded after the Cold War leaving America and its NATO allies militarily dominant. Retreating from rivalry, Russia joined other regional states in a new Arctic Council that has proved a model of shared global governance, fostering cooperation in areas from environmental protection and search and rescue to commercial shipping and fisheries. Importantly, Arctic Council members agreed over a decade ago to settle any territorial disputes through the United Nations Convention on the **Law of the Sea** framework — **and have scrupulously kept to that agreement**. It is **simply false** that **Russia threatens** to seize the North Pole seabed or other Arctic territory, or that China, a nonvoting observer at the Arctic Council, threatens to undermine the independence of regional states through its so-called "Polar Silk Road."