

CIL - UiT/NCLOS Workshop

Governance of the Arctic in Times of Geopolitical Uncertainty

26 September 2023, 8:30-12:00

Resuming Research with Russia on the Arctic Environment – Challenges and Possible Options

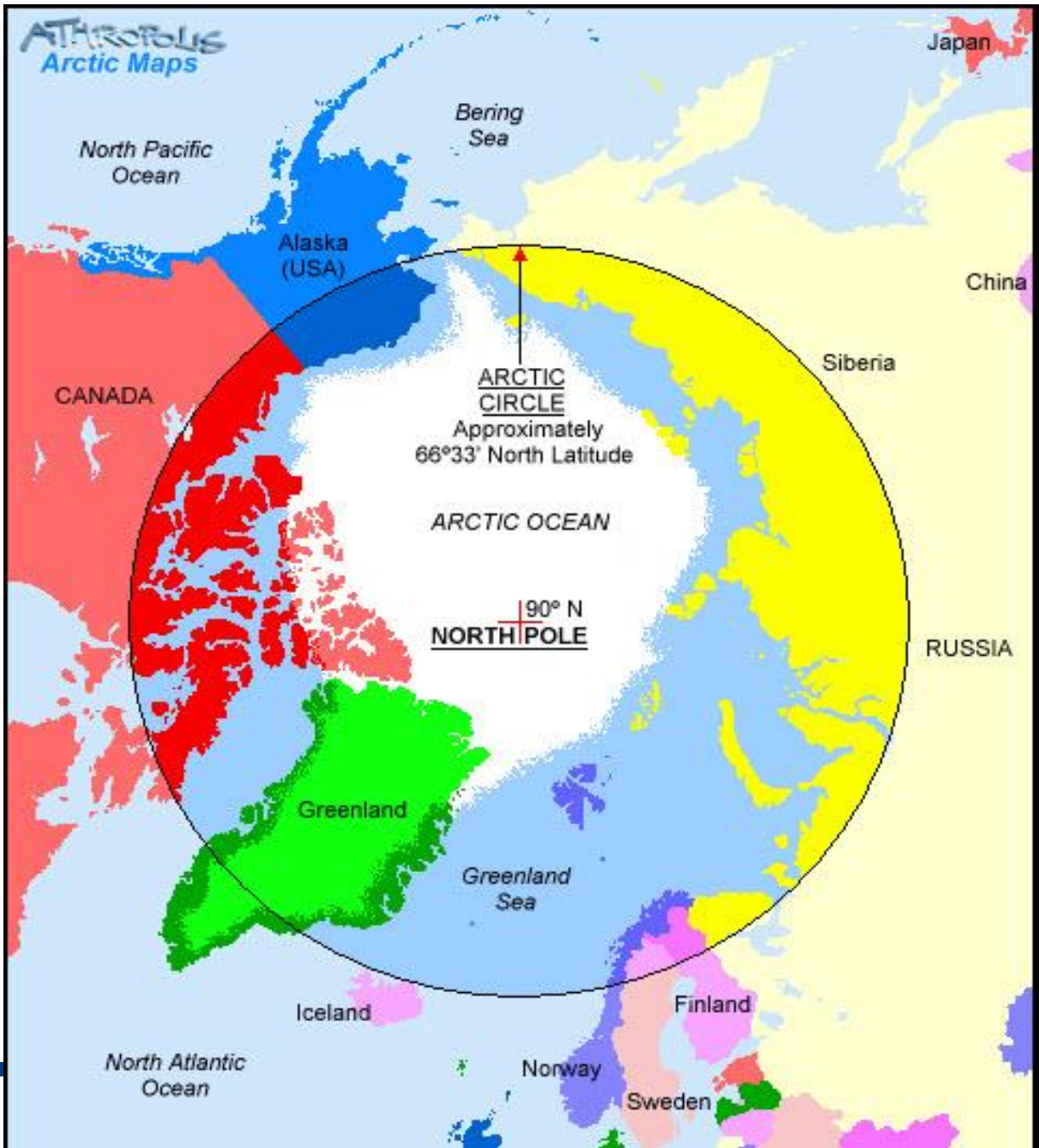
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Part 1

Background on the Arctic and Arctic Council





Polar stereographic projection



1996 Ottawa Declaration on the Arctic Council

1. The Arctic Council is established as a high level forum to:
 - (a) provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular¹ issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic. . .
5. **Decisions** of the Arctic Council are to be **by consensus** of the Members

1. The Arctic Council should not deal with matters related to military security.

Joint Communique on the Establishment of the Arctic Council

- Ministers viewed the establishment of this new intergovernmental forum as an important milestone in their commitment to enhance cooperation in the circumpolar North.
- The Council will provide a mechanism for addressing the common concerns and challenges faced by their governments and the people of the Arctic.
- To this end, Ministers referred particularly to the **protection of the Arctic environment** and **sustainable development** as a means of improving the economic, social and cultural well - being in the North.

Permanent Members



1. Denmark
2. Finland
3. Iceland
4. Norway
5. Russia
6. Sweden
7. Canada
8. United States

[HTTPS://WWW.ARCTICCENRE.ORG/EN/ARCTICREGION/MAPS/ADMINISTRATIVE-AREAS](https://www.arcticcentre.org/en/arcticregion/maps/administrative-areas)

Permanent Participants (Indigenous Peoples' Organizations)

1. **AIA - Aleut International Association** – Russia & USA
2. **AAC - Arctic Athabaskan Council** – Canada & USA
3. **GCI - Gwich'in Council International** – Canada & USA
4. **ICC – INUIT Circumpolar Council** – Canada, USA, Greenland & Russia
5. **RAIPON** – Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North
6. **Saami Council** – Finland, Russia, Norway & Sweden

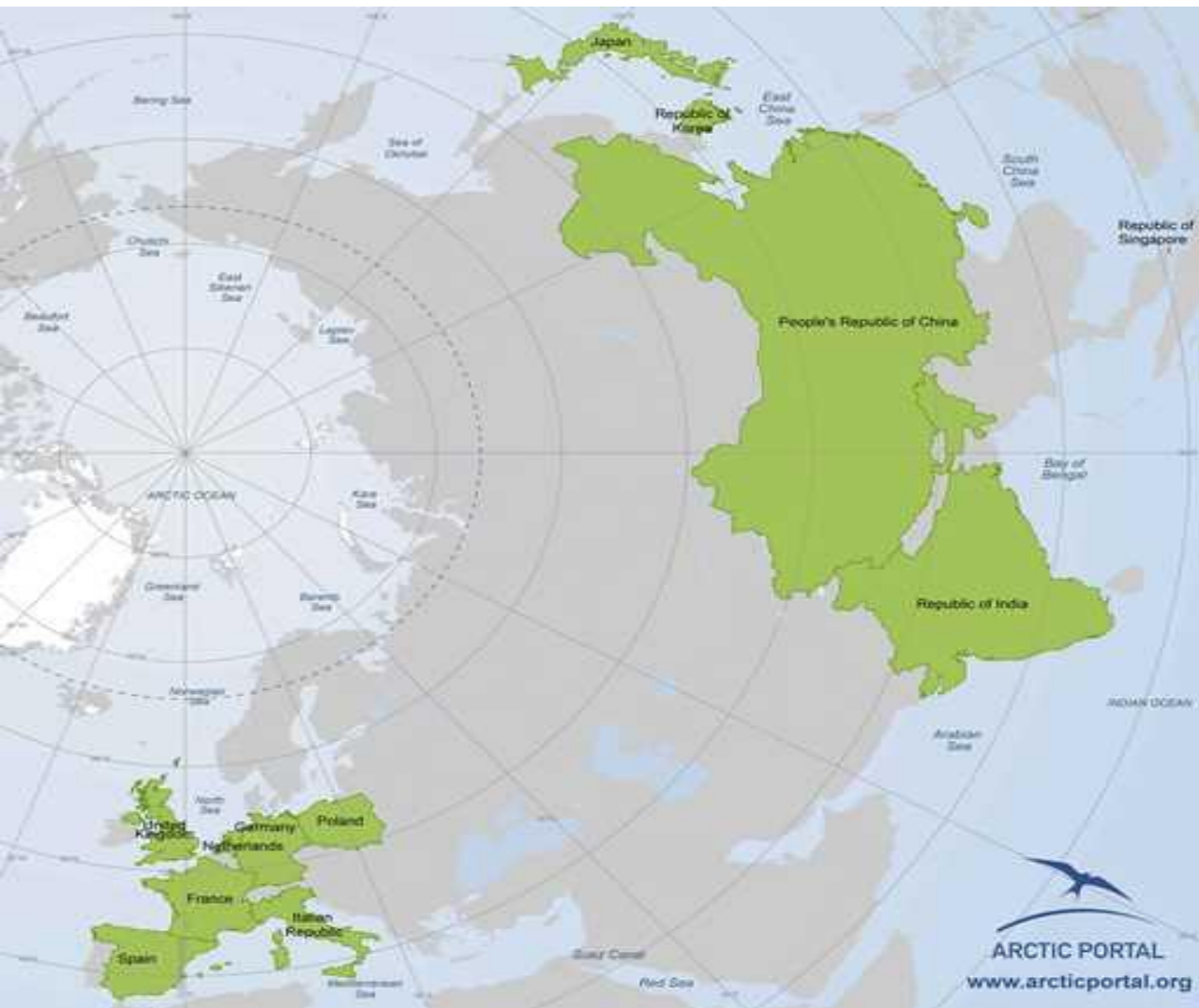
Note: Approximately 500,000 of the 4 million inhabitants of the Arctic are indigenous peoples



Arctic Council Observer States

1. Germany 1998
2. Netherlands 1998
3. Poland 1998
4. United Kingdom 1998
5. France 2000
6. Italy 2013
7. China 2013
8. Japan 2013
9. Korea 2013
10. India 2013
11. Singapore 2013
12. Switzerland 2017

Arctic Council Observer States



Arctic Council Observer States



AC Observer states:

Twelve non-arctic countries have been admitted as observers to the Arctic Council:

- France
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Spain
- United Kingdom
- People's Republic of China
- Italian Republic
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Republic of Singapore
- Republic of India

Nine Intergovernmental and Inter-Parliamentary Organizations have been given observer status:

- International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)
- Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO)
- North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO)
- Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)

Eleven Non-governmental organizations are observers in the Arctic Council:

- Advisory Committee on Protection of the Seas (ACOPS)
- Arctic Institute of North America (AINA) - Formerly Arctic Cultural Gateway (ACG)
- Association of World Reindeer Herders (AWRH)
- Circumpolar Conservation Union (CCU)
- International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)
- International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA)
- International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH)
- International Work Order for Indigenous Affairs (IWGA)
- Northern Forum (NF)
- University of the Arctic (UArctic)
- World Wide Fund for Nature-Global Arctic Program (WWF)

Source: Arctic Council, edited by Arctic Portal





1. 2011 Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic
2. 2013 Agreement on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic
3. Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment informed the adoption of the Polar Code by the IMO
4. Studies on Black Carbon and Methane Emissions, Marine Litter and Low Sulphur Fuels
5. In 2017 the Arctic Council initiated and facilitated a legally binding Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation among the Arctic States

Observers in Arctic Council

- Increasing number of observers are invited to attend meetings of the Arctic Council
 - States – 13
 - International Organizations – 13
 - NGOs – 12
 - Total - 38





Part 2

Russia-Ukraine War Pauses Work of Arctic Council

Importance of Arctic to Russia

- Russia's strategic vision sees the Arctic as integral to its development.
- In 2021, Arctic zones accounted for 10 percent of Russia's national GDP, and 20 percent of its exports (Alexei Chekunkov, Minister for Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic).
- In 2022, Russia approved its "NSR Development Plan Until 2035" to develop the Arctic.
- The Arctic was originally intended to service both Eastern and Western markets but has now seen a shift towards the Far East after sanctions were introduced.



-  Military base
-  Oil and gas reserves
-  Minerals
-  Disputed border



[HTTPS://ARCTICPORTAL.ORG/AP-LIBRARY/NEWS/2487-ARCTIC-JOURNAL-THE-NORTHERN-SEA-ROUTE-FROM-STRATEGIES-TO-REALITIES](https://arcticportal.org/ap-library/news/2487-arctic-journal-the-northern-sea-route-from-strategies-to-realities)

Russian Chairmanship of Arctic Council in 2021

- On 20 May 2021 the chairmanship of the Arctic Council passed to Russia for the second time
- The overarching theme of the Russian Chairmanship was stated to be “Responsible Governance for Sustainable Arctic”
- Russia stated that its chairmanship would focus on 4 areas:
 1. Arctic inhabitants and indigenous peoples
 2. Environmental Protection and Climate Change
 3. Socioeconomic development
 4. Strengthening the Arctic Council

Russia-Ukraine War puts work of Arctic Council “on hold”

- On 24 February 2022 Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine
- In early March 2022, the seven western members of the Arctic Council issued a joint declaration stating that their representatives will not go to Russia for meetings of the Arctic Council
- The work of the Arctic Council was put on hold
- The pause applied to all official Council meetings as well as its sub-bodies, including scientific cooperation on the environment and climate change
- The Russian chair stated that it is open to resuming cooperation once the time is ripe

Norway Assumed Chairmanship in 2023

- Norway became Chair of Arctic Council on 10-11 May 2023 in an online ceremony
- Norway stated that it will continue to support ongoing activities and projects of the 6 working groups of the Arctic Council
- Norway's priorities are based on the Arctic Council Strategic Plan which was adopted in 2021
- Norway will:
 1. Enhance knowledge about the Arctic climate & environment
 2. Improve access to and use of research data
 3. Strengthen cooperation on conservation of Arctic biodiversity
 4. Focus particularly on black carbon and methane
 5. Support international climate change action

Changes and Challenges

- On 21 February 2023, Russia amended its Arctic policy, removing references to Russia's cooperation with the Arctic Council and focussing on Russian national interests in the region
- On 4 April 2023 Finland joined NATO and Sweden is in the process of joining NATO - Result will be that all members of the Arctic Council will be members of NATO **except Russia**
- Partial resumption of activities of the Arctic Council began in June, 2023, but only for initiatives that do not involve Russia
- Result: Geopolitics will make it extremely difficult to bring the level of cooperation back to what it was before the pause

Impact of the Change in Geo-Politics

- 53% of the Arctic coastline is Russian and almost half of the population of the Arctic live in the Russian Arctic
- The most important work of the Arctic Council on climate change has taken place in Northwestern Russia
- The change in geopolitics of the Arctic will result in consequential adverse side effects for Arctic Indigenous Peoples and global research on climate change.
- The long-term disruption of joint research with Russia will considerably weaken scientific advancements and environmental management in the region.

Part 3

Resuming Research on the Arctic Environment – Possible Options

Follow Antarctica

- On 4 November 2023 the second major diplomatic meeting under the Antarctic Treaty System since the start of the Ukraine war was held in Hobart, Tasmania
- The meeting was that of the **Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)**, which is responsible for fisheries and marine protection in the Southern Ocean
- Considerable time was spent in the meeting on national statements about Ukraine, and procedural wrangles about how these would or would not be reflected in the meeting's final report
- Nevertheless, the Commission by and large conducted its business in the usual way.

Support Research Initiatives of Arctic Council Observer States

- The Arctic Council was designed to give primacy and control to the States bordering the Arctic Ocean
- States with an interest in the Arctic have been admitted as Arctic Council Observer States, but their role is restricted even though they have legitimate interests in the Arctic
- Observer States such as China and India have good relations with both Russia and the other members of the Arctic Council
- Some Observer States also have the financial and technical capacity to make significant contributions to research in the Arctic, including research on issues where they have a direct interest, such as climate change and the regulation of international shipping

Arctic Council Observer States should initiate Research

- Arctic Council Observer States could organize research projects focused on the Russian Arctic that are consistent with the research conducted by the Arctic Council Permanent Members
- Russia may be willing to conduct joint research with Arctic Council Observer States in areas under its sovereignty if those States also assisted Russia in achieving its development goals in the Russian Arctic
- Arctic Council Observer States could also encourage both Russia and the Arctic Council Permanent Members to share research and coordinate their policies in order to address climate change and protect the marine environment

Thanks for your attention!

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