


Great Decisions 2021

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CHAPTER 4

The Arctic

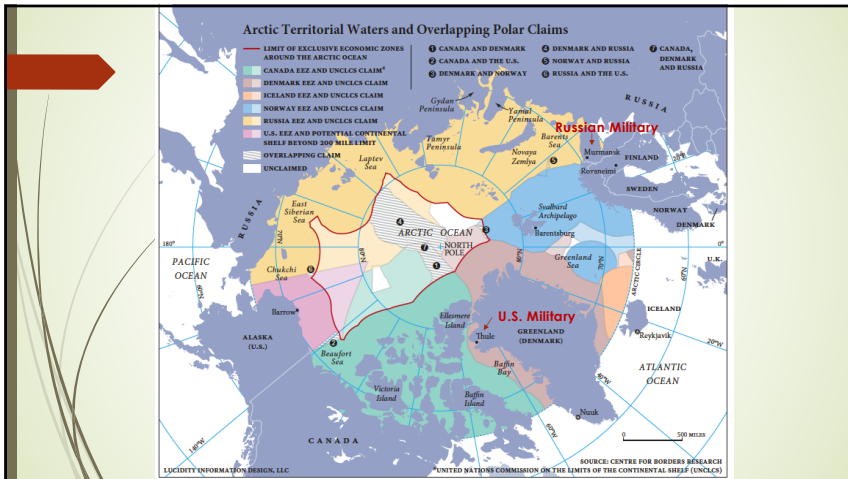


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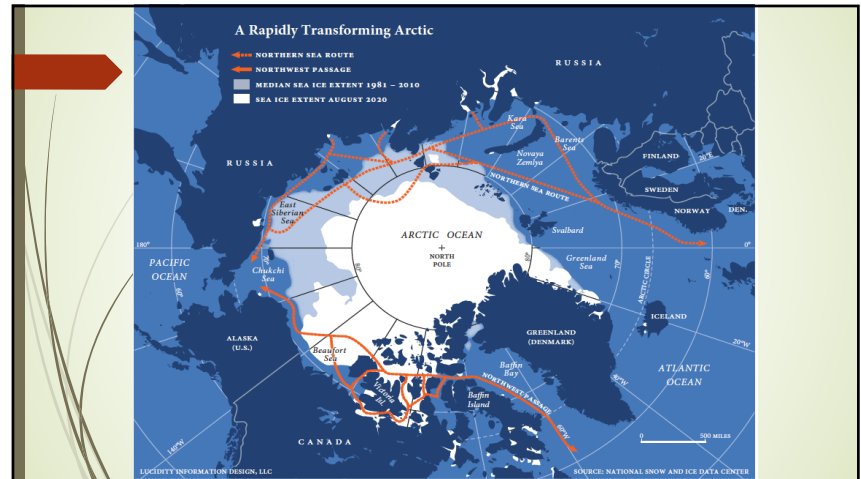
Nations of the Arctic

Arctic Coastal States	Other Nations within Arctic Circle
Canada	Finland
Denmark	Iceland's EEZ
Norway	Sweden
Russia	
United States	

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International Organizations/Agreements Relevant to the Arctic

- **1957** – North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). U.S. & Canada to jointly defend against air/space threats
- **1996** – Arctic Council for environment & sustainable development, comprising 8 Arctic Nations and 6 Indigenous Peoples' Organizations. As of 2020, 13 non-Arctic nations have observer status (*Switzerland!*) Further declarations/agreements:
 - **2011** – Search & rescue
 - **2013** – Marine oil pollution preparedness & response
 - **2017** – Scientific cooperation
 - **2019** – No Common Declaration, as U.S. refused to accept any reference to global warming

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Ongoing Issues within the Arctic

- **Canada** – Requires every ship within Northwest Passage to register with Canadian Coast Guard, a claim based on UNCLOS treaty, which U.S. challenges
- **Greenland/Denmark** – Increasing U.S. interest led to expanding Thule Air Base, reopening consulate in Nuuk, expanded development aid, and Trump's offer to buy Greenland
- **Norway** – Russian assertiveness around Kola Peninsula brought calls for expanded NATO presence in the Arctic.
- **Russia** – Similar to Canada, Russia claims under UNCLOS right to impose fees for passage through Northern Sea Route and require Russian icebreaker escort.

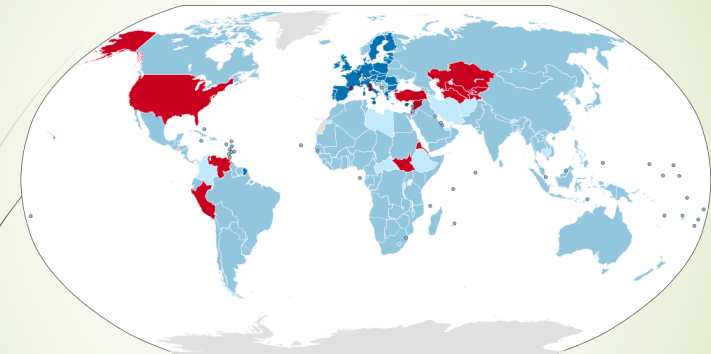
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United Nations Convention on The Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

- **1982-94** – The Law of the Sea Treaty was negotiated and came into effect once 60 nations ratified it. There are now 167 parties to the treaty.
- **UNCLOS** defines the rights and responsibilities of nations with respect to their use of the world's oceans, establishing guidelines for businesses, the environment, and the management of marine natural resources.
- **U.S.** – Reagan had some reservations about UNCLOS, but these were addressed in amendments under Bush 1, so in 1994, Clinton signed the agreement, but the Senate never ratified it.
- **2012** – The Pentagon, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, every living former Secretary State, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), and many others sought to get the treaty ratified, but 34 Republicans gave SFRC Chairman John Kerry a letter pledging to vote NO, thus scuttling any hope. No further attempts have been made.

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Parties to the Law of the Sea Treaty



Parties Signatories Non-parties
Parties, dually represented by the European Union

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The Arctic Institute on June 2020 Memo A Shifting Focus of U.S. Arctic Policy

- ▶ Trump presidential memo focused Arctic policy on:
 - ▶ perceived threat from China, AND
 - ▶ an overwhelmingly military response
- ▶ Called for:
 - ▶ Launching 6 new “polar security cutters,”
 - ▶ Launching 3 heavy icebreakers by 2029, and
 - ▶ Establishing 2 domestic and 2 international support bases
- ▶ Obama-era Arctic policies made no mention of China; no clear Arctic policy as yet from Biden

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Discussion Questions

- ▶ **Arctic Council** – Should the Arctic Council countries prioritize policies to limit melting of Arctic ice?
- ▶ **U. S. Reluctance** – Why has the U.S. been a “reluctant” Arctic nation in the past?
- ▶ **U.S. Interests** – What are our primary interests in the Arctic? Within what fora/groups should the U.S. be pursuing those interests?
- ▶ **China & Russia** – Do we need to catch up? Are the challenges from these countries' increased activity in the Arctic the same or different?

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