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Changing Geopolitics: Reinforcing Competitive Proclivities in the Arctic Region

Amna Kalhoro

M. Phil graduate in Area Study Centre for Africa, North and South America,
Quid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

Correspondence: amnasaleem095@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The US 2021 Arctic strategy views the Arctic as a shared zone and potential corridor for strategic war. Arctic nations became more circumspect in 2014 after Russia intervened in Ukraine, and now the war between Ukraine and Russia has advanced, littoral governments are gravely concerned for their security and national interests. Russia's fear and quest for regional control are primarily caused by NATO's increasing involvement, which Moscow views as a threat to its national security. The possibility for expanded militarization and information-gathering activities are some of the new security realities in the Arctic. The politicization of the Arctic region can be understood by categorizing it into three major variables: security, economy, and climate change. Climate change has opened up new avenues for security and economic development. It has increased competitiveness in shipping and security. Each of these elements has been explored in this work. The paper is divided into two sections; the first explores how state actors might easily exploit trading opportunities and considerable economic prospects as a result of climate change. The second part of the article addresses how different actors' arctic strategies create dilemmas and raise current security issues in the Arctic region.

Keywords: Climate change, Polar Silk Road, Strategic Conflict, Security, Game Analogy, Arctic region.

Introduction

In recent years, competition in the Arctic has accelerated from regional to global concerns. Climate change is the main factor driving this; it has facilitated the ability to explore parts of the Arctic that, a few decades ago, were inaccessible to outsiders. It is providing a lot more options for political and commercial activity. Everyone, not only the Arctic states, are interested in this area since it is a new common global. Regarding their security and the numerous prospects it presents, Russia, the US, China, and the other eight arctic governments are all highly engaged. The arctic region's opening is related to the economics, which is ultimately creating a security alliance for the states.

The Arctic region is comprised of parts of Canada, Denmark Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. In addition to participating in polar politics via the polar silk road and aiming to influence arctic politics in a way that will advance its long-term interests, China, claims to be a near-arctic state in this new evolving world order. The Arctic region was strategically exploited by the Soviets and Americans during the Cold War to project their power capabilities, but

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as the Soviet Union disintegrated, the dynamic of competition turned into cooperation. As a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the West's response to unprecedented sanctions—the relationship between Russia and the West appears to be in ruins yet again. Due to the conflict in Ukraine, some of Russia's nearby nations, including Finland, Sweden, and the Arctic States, want to join NATO, and this increased insecurity is encouraging a more aggressive stance. In contrast to the US and its Allies, climate change is completely in Russia's favour because it is bringing the Arctic gap between Russia and NATO countries down to around 100 miles. By constructing several military sites, enhancing its nuclear-capable and upgrading its first-strike capabilities, Russia has also made major investments in its trading routes in the Arctic. The US has also begun similar operations at the Alaskan border, including the deployment of troops and the development of security facilities and equipment.

As opposed to these two principal players, their third potent state Currently, China has different strategic interests. Science, environment, international airspace, navigation freedom, fisheries, infrastructure, and resource development are of greater significance to China. Because of the available economic resources in the area, China is transitioning from an observed state to an active state. The ambitions of China in the area don't seem to be waning. As a result, growing tensions between the US and China as well as the US and Russia in the context of a struggle for power and influence have set these nations up for an inescapable confrontation, originating from either the Arctic or, possibly, the South China Sea

Research Methodology

This study has been presented within the scope of qualitative research design. To examine the potential advantages and difficulties brought on by the power rivalry in the Arctic region, qualitative approaches will be used. The researcher has gathered information from the available secondary sources. The researcher used a descriptive and analytical approach in this study. The researcher obtains, examines, and interprets the knowledge using an analytical technique. Policy makers will gain most from this research as they develop more effective strategies to ensure maximum benefits.

Climate Change: A Catalyst for Strategic Competition

Climate change is among the most prominent non-traditional threats faced by all states and regions, albeit it is substantially worse in the Arctic region. Arctic temperatures are rising more quickly than anywhere else on the planet, leading to permafrost thawing, ice melt, increasing sea levels, and even more recurrent and harsh weather. Regaining geostrategic and geopolitical importance for this region is largely attributed to the climate changes in the Arctic. The Arctic region overheated an average of 2.3 °C since the 1970s, whereas the globe as a whole increased an average of 1.1 °C. (Sherri Goodman, January 2021) According to multiple calculations, the Arctic will start having summers without ice as early as the 2030s. For the past two years, the permafrost (Arctic soil that has been frozen) has been thawing at an alarming speed, opening up additional shipping lanes and making it quicker to do operations like mining, monitoring, and exploring.

Even if many industries and stakeholders are increasing their investment prospects due to the rising temperature of the Arctic region, this is not good for global stability and the planet's future since more economic activity leads to higher territorial claims, which results in militarization. Military presence in the area is correlated with economic activity. Due to the region's long-term freezing, the oil and gas reserves were untapped and never harnessed to their full potential, but now they are offering states and the business community opportunities. Global warming and climate change have caused the ice to melt at an extraordinary rate, facilitating the ability to conduct commercial operations like drilling and exploration as well as travel through the current shipping channels in a feasible manner.

Commercial ships like the Arctic during the summer months since the journey is quicker and requires less money, time, and effort. Currently, the Arctic region offers three maritime routes: the transpolar sea route, the Northeast passage, and the Northwest passage. To travel across these channels, commercial ships needed icebreaker assistance. Climate change has made it possible for states to travel through the area without icebreakers since 2007. In 2013, more than 71 cargo ships navigated through the Arctic region. (“As the Ice Melts, the Arctic Opens up to Cargo Ships and Energy Firms”, 2014) With each passing year, the number of navigators from all routes is growing.

States that are far from the Arctic—China is 5000 km away—and the desolate Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is making significant investments there. Climate change is to blame for the unexpected influx of actors in the area. All of the countries that border the Arctic region, including Russia and the US, are rethinking their policies there due to the immense economic and strategic opportunities it presents. The productivity gains for Russia are short-lived, and their geopolitical power will wane as a result of their unwillingness to diversify and adjust their economies to the new realities. Given that 2 million of the 4 million people living in the Arctic reside in Russia and that 52% of its coastline is made up of the Arctic region, one could say that Russia controls the decision-making process.

Along with taking advantage of the potential that climate change brought about by artificial human activity, smaller arctic nations, along with China, India and Russia with a leading role of the US, are carefully evaluating the best ways to carry out international accords to limit climate change. President Biden devised a severe climate strategy to combat the emissions. Additionally, he committed to using his substantial diplomatic clout in the Arctic, which may serve as a stabilizing factor and offer a possibility for the development of new institutional capacities for the area.

Polar Thawing is Creating Economic Opportunities

The economics, which is ultimately creating a security alliance for the states, is what drives the opening of the Arctic region. There are numerous economic opportunities in the regions. A great trove of huge reserves, including fisheries, natural gas and oil reserves, extra arable land, and other commodities, will be revealed by melting sea ice and thawing permafrost. Natural resources can be classified as the minerals and animal resources found within the Arctic Circle that can assist humanity in terms of usefulness or economic gain. The mineral resources comprise sizable reserves of minerals such as iron ore, copper, nickel, zinc phosphates, and diamonds, as well as

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significant reserves of oil and natural gas. The Arctic's bountiful fisheries make up the majority of its natural resources. (Russia, 2022)

A substantial majority of unexplored hydrocarbons, including 15% of the world's oil, 30% of the world's gas, and 20% of LNG deposits, are located in the Arctic, which connects 90% of global trade. According to the US Geological Survey, the Arctic seabed contains gas resources and there are more than 400 billion barrels of untapped oil and gas. ("Fishers of Eurasian Arctic Come Together in a Time of War - Our World.", 2022) The arctic region is destined to be dominated by the oil sector and transportation routes. There are two active routes for ship transit in the Arctic Ocean, the Northeast Passage, which includes the Barents Sea and the Northern Sea Route (NSR), through Russian waters, and the Northwest Passage (NWP), through American and Canadian waters. While the ice sheet disappears, maritime corporations are encouraged to use Arctic transport links instead of competitors like the Suez Canal, leading to extended summer operating hours for these channels. The NSP and NWP both have 30–40 per cent overall quicker sailing durations than the NSP, which translates into a greater productivity of up to 10–13 fewer days for ships travelling through either passage. (Stauffer, 2012)

Similar to the Mediterranean Sea, this area "is or has been, operationally and economically vital for the transmission of naval, air, and land-based military force." Both are shallow and contain limited and defensible choke points, The Arctic may also develop into a region in the genuine Mediterranean tradition owing to the opening of new sea lanes and the economic implications of communication for the civilized world, but this morphing is on hold until environmental factors have completely altered the geological condition of the Arctic. The Russian Arctic makes up about 20% of its GDP, while the US Arctic makes up 1% of its GDP. (Mathieu, 2022) The Arctic economies of Finland, Canada, Denmark and Norway (the NATO member Arctic states) are all far smaller than the Arctic economies of Russia. The extraction of hydrocarbons, mining, aquaculture (harvest, farmed, and processed), and mineral sectors all play substantial roles in different governments of the Arctic economies, but these areas do not all predominate the region's economic systems.

Arctic Strategies and a Game Analogy

The best method to use to comprehend the present situation of Arctic politics is structural realism. where different actors are using different strategies to maximize their power. Dr. Mike has identified three strategies used by different actors of this event in order to maximize their power and to secure their interests in the region. To understand the roles of the main participants in Arctic politics, Dr. Mike Sfrage (With Karsten Friis (NUPI, 2022) uses a simple game analogy in his podcast. According to him, Russia, a crucial arctic state led by Putin, is engaged in a struggle for survival. They are primarily concerned with economic resources and the issue of survival. Resources from the Arctic are assisting Putin in reviving the country's domestic sector. In a time of crisis when Russia is dealing with sanctions and losing trade with its neighbours as well as other trading partners, it is the key factor in keeping its GDP stable.

Russia is currently on the verge of a financial disaster. In the Ukraine war, half of the incentives have been used international corporations are leaving the country as a result of economic sanctions imposed by the international community, the country lost access to important imports of technology and inputs, and its oil and gas markets

were lost for the long term. The World Bank and IMF have similarly predicted that the Russian economy will fall by 6% this year. For both its existence and to play a significant role in future international politics, Russia is extremely dependent on the Arctic region.

In contrast, he thinks it is a go-game approach in the case of China. Being in the area is only a key element of the Chinese Dream. China is seeking its long-term objectives in the area, whilst other players are currently more concerned with urgent security issues. A component of China's overall agenda includes the Arctic. Instead of just building military bases, they are more interested in long-term investments and the success of their major project, the "Polar Silk Road." R&D, the availability of new shipping lanes, fishing rights, and the division of natural resources are of greater interest to China.

The US's inclusion in the Arctic region is a game-changer. Being in the Arctic region, he argues, is an extension of US cold war tactics. They aspired to have a global presence. He compared the US presence there to that in the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the South China Sea, and the Arctic region. Since the US is an Arctic state, it will need to protect itself from Russia in the future and prepare the area for China in terms of future political dimensions. By demonstrating its military prowess and aiding NATO members, the US can dissuade Russia from striking against itself and its partner while also preparing for a long-term strategy against China.

Russian Obsession with the Arctic Region

Russia's long-standing fascination with the Arctic region dates back to the Russian-Turkic Cossacks' conquest of Siberia for one specific, solely commercial, to get excess to furs. The function that fur exports played for Russia in the 17th century was similar to what petroleum plays nowadays. Since then the Arctic region has been one of the power tools of Russia. In contrast to regions of Canada or Alaska, the Soviet Union's Arctic areas had a very different development process, building large settlements, significant industrial complexes, and infrastructure. Throughout the Cold War, its strategic importance was utilized as well. The shocking Arctic warming presents economic opportunities for the Russian Federation. Moscow has major economic reasons to want to control the Arctic region, and doing so will be crucial for the country's economy in the future. Russia is a resource-extraction economy, and the majority of its easily accessible onshore resources are reducing at an alarming rate. The arctic zone's economic potential is vital to Russia's future. This zone, which will expand in the future, contributes 10% to the country's GDP and 20% of its exports. (Mathieu, 2022)

The cornerstone of the Russian recovery strategy is returning to the Arctic. Russian polar nationalism and Stalin's Red Arctic propaganda served as the foundation for President Putin's Arctic guidelines; securing this area is meant to be a component of hard power. Their main objectives are to safeguard Russia's future economy, improve domestic security, and set up a command center for Arctic power projection. The Kremlin also wants the United Nations Commission on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to officially recognize its claimed exclusive economic zones in the Arctic. The current initiatives of the national government are to accomplish transport policy and energy policy as soon as possible by the construction of the necessary infrastructure for the preservation of the Northern Sea Route (NSR),

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which serves as a major maritime route, and the development of Yamal Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). (Matthew, 2022)



Source: Center of Strategic and International Studies (Matthew, 2022)

The Northern Sea Route, a traditional navigable waterway that previously connected Europe and Asia, has been made more visible by climate change. One-fifth of the sovereign territory is located in the far north, and Moscow expects that such a renaissance will also revive these areas and conduct most of the trade through this waterway to avoid extra time, energy and money. Since the 1930s, and particularly in the 1970s, the Soviets had utilized the Northern Sea Route regularly for filling-to-the-brim transits between Europe and Asia, for supplying food and fuel to its Arctic outposts, and for shipping goods from northern regions lacking land-based transportation. The NSR will serve as Russia's primary national transportation route in the Arctic according to Russian Arctic policy 2020–2023. (Matthew, 2022) Russian intent to defend the NSR is thus demonstrated by the deployment of the Northern Fleet. Consequently, the Northern Fleet's presence shows that Russia wants to safeguard the NSR. Therefore, Russia is transitioning from a terrestrial to a maritime power in the region with the opening of the NSR and the rebirth of the Northern Fleet. The Kremlin's desire to reach the naval choke points in Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom is evident in the policy stance of 2035, which aims to highlight the importance of Russia's sea strength.

On the Yamal Peninsula, "Yamal LNG," the first and largest LNG plant in Russia, was inaugurated in 2009. Using liquefaction technology, it produces roughly 9.6 million tons of LNG annually and exports it mostly to China, South Korea, and Japan. (Ingmar, 2022). Securing the nation's requirement for hydrocarbons and the utilization of the Northern Sea Route as its sole national transit route are Yamal LNG's top priorities. However, these projects are facing financial challenges as a result of the Ukraine conflict, and Russia is turning to China for financial support as it was previously dependent on it and appears to be becoming more so going forward. Several projects are being undertaken by Russia with Chinese assistance

as part of the Chinese Arctic strategy of investment and exploitation of economic benefits. Along with Yamal LNG, other projects include the Payakha oil field, where China is interested in investing \$5 billion, and the Zarubino port, a landlocked Russian commercial port with rail links to China and Korea. (Ingmar, 2022)

According to a report from 2022, the Northern Fleet, the greatest naval fleet of Russia, consists of roughly 33 surface warships, more than 80 operating ships, 13 submarines, a nuclear missile cruiser, and several other units that are either undergoing maintenance or are otherwise not in service. (Michael, 2014) It has specially trained battalions to fight in the Arctic region, and the number of troops is growing due to the shifting political climate in Europe. The first mobile nuclear power plant (NPP) in the world was the Russian "Akademic Lomonosov." (Hille, 2016) It is the eleventh nuclear power plant in Russia. Western countries, especially the US, have expressed concern over its startling performance. The Chukotka, a region in the Bering Strait that shares a maritime border with the United States, started receiving energy from the Lomonosov. More than 47.3 million kWh of electricity have been produced by the power station.

A region known as Lomonosov has been claimed by Arctic NATO members Canada, Denmark, and Norway. In 2007, Russia launched an operation known as Arctica, equipped with two small submarines, and put the Russian flag there. It was a calculated attempt by Putin to demonstrate to the outside world that the territory is theirs, but on diplomatic grounds, the action has been rationalized by equating it with the US placing a flag on the moon and calling it a scientific expense. Russia is a dominant force in the area, as evidenced by the fact that it now has nine nuclear-powered icebreakers and is developing another three. No other arctic state has such a vessel. Due to the incident in Alaska in 2011, the US had to ask Russia for assistance in breaking the ice, and Russia provided it. Since that time, the US has been trying to create its icebreaker technology. (Ahmad Shaheer, 2020)

Russian dominance has faced various problems as a result of the change in the Arctic's strategic environment. Russian economic and geopolitical aspirations are likely to be hampered by these difficulties. Russia must therefore adopt a thorough strategy about the United States and its NATO allies in light of the shifting dynamics. In the same way, Russia must use Sino-Russian collaboration wisely in its common hostility with the United States, while also balancing Chinese cooperation by resolving the legal ambiguities. To accomplish its larger economic and geopolitical objectives, Russia needs a clear strategy.

The US is the new Ambassador of the Arctic Region

Biden's Arctic policy is based on four crucial pillars, including security, cooperation, environmental protection, and sustainable economic development; he asserted the US position as an ambassador of the Arctic region. The U.S. government vowed to cooperate with allies to collaboratively develop and lead common measures to address security issues by maintaining a military and diplomatic presence throughout the Arctic. With investments in infrastructure and support for expanding economic sectors, the U.S. government promised to promote sustainable development and enhance Alaskans' quality of life. They have expanded their geopolitical activities as a result of the rapid climatic change and the Ukraine war. The main purpose of the US Arctic policy is to impede the Russian pretension of the Northern Sea Route and the militarization of the Arctic zone. There are no specific

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arctic interests that the US must gain access to or secure, but they are committed to a struggle to contain Russia and keep NATO active in the region to sustain the public's image of Russia as a threat.

Following President Biden's Arctic plan, multilateralism in the region and the development of a Department of Defense (DoD) facility in Alaska are encouraged that will be directly governed by homeland security. (Julia Nesheiwat, 2022) The strategic significance of Alaska will improve its power in the Arctic. In Alaska, there are nine military installations housing up to 22,000 U.S. troops. The operating area of Alaska offers exceptional prospects for a naval power to improve the U.S Army's competitiveness and crisis response capacity.

Eielson Air Force Base (AFB) and Elmendorf AFB are two major airfields that the US operates close to the Arctic. In addition to housing combat and support aircraft like F-22 interceptors and airborne early-warning (AEW) aircraft, both bases have room for significantly more troops. The US Air Force opted to make Eielson the first overseas facility for operational F-35A combat aircraft beginning in 2020, (Rob Huebert, 2022) but did not cite the Arctic as a factor in its decision; instead, it cited the Pacific theatre and training prospects. Despite having more than 200 long-range maritime patrol aircraft, only a small number of US Coast Guard HC-130 aircraft located on Kodiak Island fly over the Bering Sea and the Arctic. (Kristian, 2019)

They frequently hold ice drill exercises there due to the possible threats posed by Russia. NATO, led by the US, has several military bases in the area, but because of the wide coastline boundary, Russia has the largest military fleet, which is the greatest threat to other littoral states. To effectively counter a new geopolitical danger, the country's armaments industry has started to focus on creating a fleet of ice-breaking vessels. Additionally, the US is working with its local NATO allies to create a security balance in opposition to the expanding Sino-Russian cooperation in the area.

The Chinese Policy of the Polar Silk Road

For long-term economic objectives, China avoided the Arctic during the Cold War, when militarization reached its peak, and during the post-Cold War period. China identifies itself as a Near Arctic State by its changing geopolitical tendencies. Due to the region's vast natural resources, which have attracted them, China, a country that exports resources, won't pass up the chance to stake a claim there. Its absence of a border with the Arctic region makes it unable to make any legally binding territorial claims. China only occupies the standing of an observer state in the region under the Arctic Council, but to consolidate its position, it has developed the huge "Polar Silk Road" (China's 'Arctic Silk Road' Projects., 2020) project as a part of the colossal Belt Road Initiative, which also includes the "Space Silk Road," "Health Silk Road," and "Digital Silk Road." The arctic silk road is China's attempt to create a firm foundation for its long-term objectives in the Arctic.

Their goals include the development of polar maritime routes, the building of infrastructure, commercial trail voyages, and significant investment with other Arctic governments. Chinese Arctic policy is based on two key strategic objectives. The first is that China wants to make investments in nations with direct ties to the arctic region. With the states that urgently require economic assistance, they have inked the following agreement through the Polar Silk Road. Chinese lobbying

efforts using the aforementioned initiatives and investments as a component of international discussions about the Arctic constitute the second method for implementing the Polar Silk Road project.

Russia is one of the important Chinese partners in the implementation of the polar silk route. In July 2017, China made the first proposal to collaborate with Russia in the Arctic. The backbone of Chinese-Russian economic cooperation in the maritime and energy sectors is an investment in NSR and Yamal LNG. They committed to a \$9.5 billion credit arrangement for an NSR infrastructure project in 2018, and they own 30% of the largest LNG project, the Russian Yamal LNG project. (Staalesen, 2018).

In its white paper, published in 2018, China declared itself a state bordering the Arctic and expressed interest in playing a significant role in the region. No country, according to them, has jurisdiction over the Arctic. It's ironic because China itself asserts ownership of the whole South China Sea. Besides signing MOUs with Russia, China also did so with other Arctic states. A partnership to create a new surveillance and research facility for the arctic region was signed in April 2018 by Finland's Arctic Space Centre and China's Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth. The station, located in Sodankylä, in northern Finland, will gather, analyze, and exchange remote sensing data, offering a free, increasingly global platform for supporting climate change research, pollution management, and Polar regions navigation. (China's 'Arctic Silk Road' Projects., 2020)

Several research centers connected to arctic security, economy, and environment have been established by China, one of which is situated in the arctic region of Norway's Svalbard Archipelago. China is developing technology that will benefit the Arctic region, and in 2020 it will launch its first icebreaker that will travel the entire Northeast Passage. ("Regaining Arctic Dominance United States Army Regaining Arctic Dominance.", 2021) It is clear from an analysis of China's comprehensive Arctic strategy that the US and its allies in the region are not directly threatened by China. China is responsible for developing the notions of a win-win situation and promoting objectives like environmental protection, scientific research and development, collaboration, consultation, support for Indigenous populations, and science-based policymaking.

Security Threats in the Arctic Region

One of the reasons Russia strives for regional domination is that Alaska is the shortest route that gives Russians easy accessibility to the US. Since the North Pole was the shortest route between the United States and the former Soviet Union, the Arctic was highlighted as a key site during the 1970s. The Arctic Ocean served as an essential strategic transit route for nuclear-powered submarines of both the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War and continues to do so now. It is also a key location for early warning and intelligence-gathering systems. Enhanced submarine capabilities have made the Arctic region a theatre of more significant subsurface military operations under the influence of contemporary sea power. Subsequently, the Arctic region became a major deterrence pillar as well as a conduit of indirect strategic attack. The only alliances that have shown signs of working together are the NATO members, including Canada, the United States, Iceland, Norway, and Denmark, against Russia and taking China as a new adversary. (Evans, 2021) turn, this led to a metaphorical "freezing" of links between the circumpolar

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republics. Although states revised their objectives and prioritized enhancing environmental protection and research and development under the Arctic Council before the manifestation of Putin's expansionist policies in eastern Europe, the dynamics are changing with the shift from a unipolar to a multipolar world order.

Concerns regarding the militarization of the Arctic have been raised by recent geostrategic trends as well as substantial Russian and NATO Arctic drills. The United States has reinstated its Second Fleet, while NATO has established a new Atlantic Command. The U.S. Congress has approved the initial funding for three heavy icebreakers in a new class of icebreakers newly dubbed Polar Security Cutters, for \$2.1 billion. (Siemon T. Wezeman, 2016) Additionally, China has stepped up its activity and launched a second icebreaker. The commercial interest in the Arctic is increasing as a result of recent temperature records at a time when geopolitical conflicts between local and international powers are on the rise. The number of missiles and submarines was decreased by the US and Russia following the end of the Cold War.

The Arctic region is currently a region of greater great-power confrontation as both Russia and the US have begun bolstering their nuclear defence and forces there. The main security concern at the moment is the Russian remilitarization of the area. The notion that NATO is being encircled by Russia in the Arctic, as a result of NATO dominance steadily expanding in eastern Europe and the Ukraine war, has led to this remilitarization. increased polar insecurity as a result of the US, NATO, and other Western countries' actions. The Kremlin may adopt a more aggressive and militarized strategy to defend Russia's ostensible national interests if these anxieties become more intertwined. (Rachael Gosnell, 2018)

Another security threat is climate change, extreme warming threatens wildlife, species, and indigenous people since the ecosystem has been neglected as a result of the political turmoil in the region. Sea levels are rising as a result of the ice melting, and permafrost is a major source of methane and carbon dioxide emissions (23 times more potent than Co₂). The impact on ocean currents will result in a shift in the global climate. Rapid melting can also exacerbate extreme weather events including hurricanes, cyclones, heat waves, and forest fires. Small island nations like Sri Lanka may suffer significant losses due to rising ocean levels, which can also trigger shoreline flooding. Many species, including the Arctic fox, Arctic Peregrine Falcon, polar bear, and beluga whale, are already extinct as a result of warming waters that have decimated marine and terrestrial populations. Large spillovers from oil and gas extraction can pollute and harm the arctic region irreparably.

Conclusion

Arctic hydrocarbons have kept playing a crucial part in Russia's policy objectives, as they have in the past, and can keep Russia on its firm path in the future for a longer period. Concerns about the likelihood of conflict in the Arctic have grown as a result of the region's increasing militarization and rivalry, which might be especially disastrous in the region's vulnerable polar surroundings. With places like the Lomonsov Corridor being owned by Moscow, Greenland, Denmark, and Canada, the tremendous resources accessible from the Arctic region have heightened tension between Arctic nations. This rivalry is not going away anytime soon. Factors like these, combined with the region's growing militarization,

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have the potential to escalate tensions and pose a serious security danger, barring dramatic warming in Russia's relations with the US and NATO states. China has been attempting to encourage relationships with Arctic states to shape the region in a win-win environment for all partners. It has also partnered with Finland, Iceland, and Norway on additional international scientific expeditions.

The situation for Russia and the United States will get far worse if Chinese nuclear-powered submarines venture into ice-covered areas. There is no assurance that Russia and China will maintain their cordial ties in the Arctic in the future. Whatever the case, the presence of submarines from the second-strongest navy in the world would pose new difficulties for both Russia and the United States in this crucial area.

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