



Arctic Governance and the Arctic Council

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My interest in the Arctic

Agenda

1. Defining the Arctic Region
2. Arctic Governance Mechanisms
 - The Arctic Council
3. Return of Great Power Competition
4. Implications for Canada





Arctic Definition

- High Arctic
 - Low Arctic
 - Sub Arctic
- the Arctic Circle (66° 33' 44" North)
 The Arctic Circle is the southernmost latitude in the Northern Hemisphere at which the sun can remain continuously above or below the horizon for 24 hours
- 10°C July isotherm
 defined as being the area where the average temperature for the warmest month (July) is below 10°C / 50°F.
 - Arctic AHDR boundary
 Arctic Human Development Report
 - Arctic EPPR boundary
 The Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response
 - Arctic CAFF boundary
 The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna
 - Arctic AMAP boundary
 The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme
 - Arctic Tree line boundary
 The northernmost latitude in the Northern Hemisphere where trees can grow; farther north, it is too cold all year round to sustain trees.

Source: GRID - Arendal, ADHR, EPPR Working Group, National Snow and Ice Data Centre, Boulder, CO, AMAP, CAFF



AGREEMENT ON ENHANCING INTERNATIONAL ARCTIC SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION NON-BINDING ILLUSTRATIVE MAP

This non-binding illustrative map shows the approximate extent of the Identified Geographic Areas described in Annex 1 of the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation. It is intended for illustrative purposes only and does not form part of the Agreement.

- Approximate Extent of Identified Geographic Areas
- 62°N
- Arctic Circle
- Additional areas covered voluntarily by Canada

Continental shelf areas are not depicted.
 U.S. Department of State, OES/OFA, April 12, 2019

Defining the Arctic Region

Three Key Factors influencing Arctic Politics between the 1970s-1990s:

- Cold War Thaw
- Emerging Indigenous Activism
- Increasing Environmental Awareness

Two Key Political Initiatives:

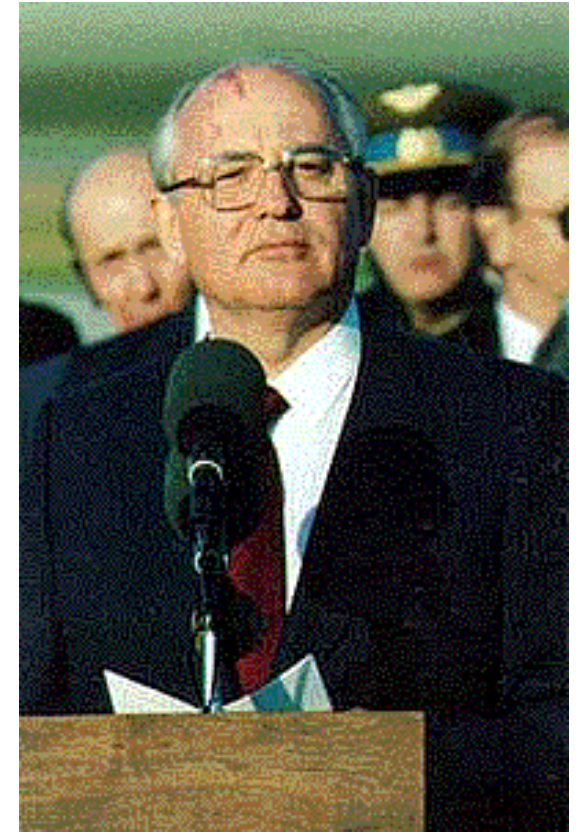
- The Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (Finnish Initiative)
- The Arctic Council (Canadian Initiative)



Arctic Peoples Conference 1973
(Photo: Jens Brøsted)



DEW Line radar sites, indicated by black dots, stretched across North America from Baffin Island to Alaska.
(Christopher Johnson/Department of National Defence)



Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, **delivering his 1987 Murmansk speech**, opening the door to transform the Arctic Circle from being a military theater to an international zone of peace

Key Arctic Governance Mechanisms

- Arctic Council
- Arctic Coast Guard Forum
- Arctic Security Forces Roundtable
- Arctic Economic Council
- Barents-Euro Arctic Council
- International Arctic Science Committee
- University of the Arctic



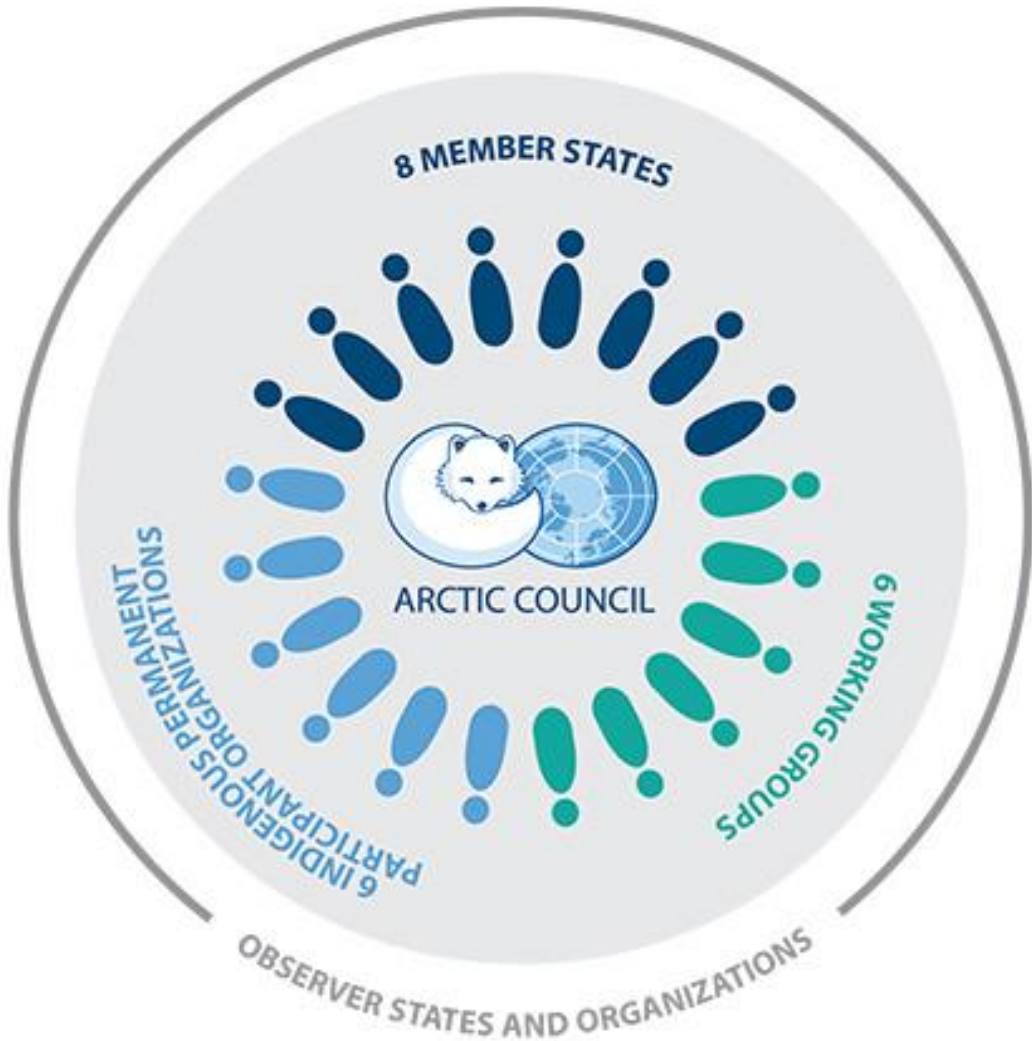
ACGF



ARCTIC COUNCIL



The Arctic Council



Aleut International Association



Arctic Athabaskan Council

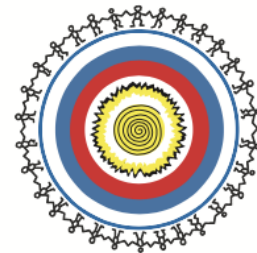


Gwich'in Council International

Gwich'in Council International



Inuit Circumpolar Council



Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North



Saami Council

Indigenous Peoples Influence at the Arctic Council



Mary Simon (to the left) at the inauguration of the Arctic Council in Ottawa 1996. (Photo: Mike Pinder Photography)

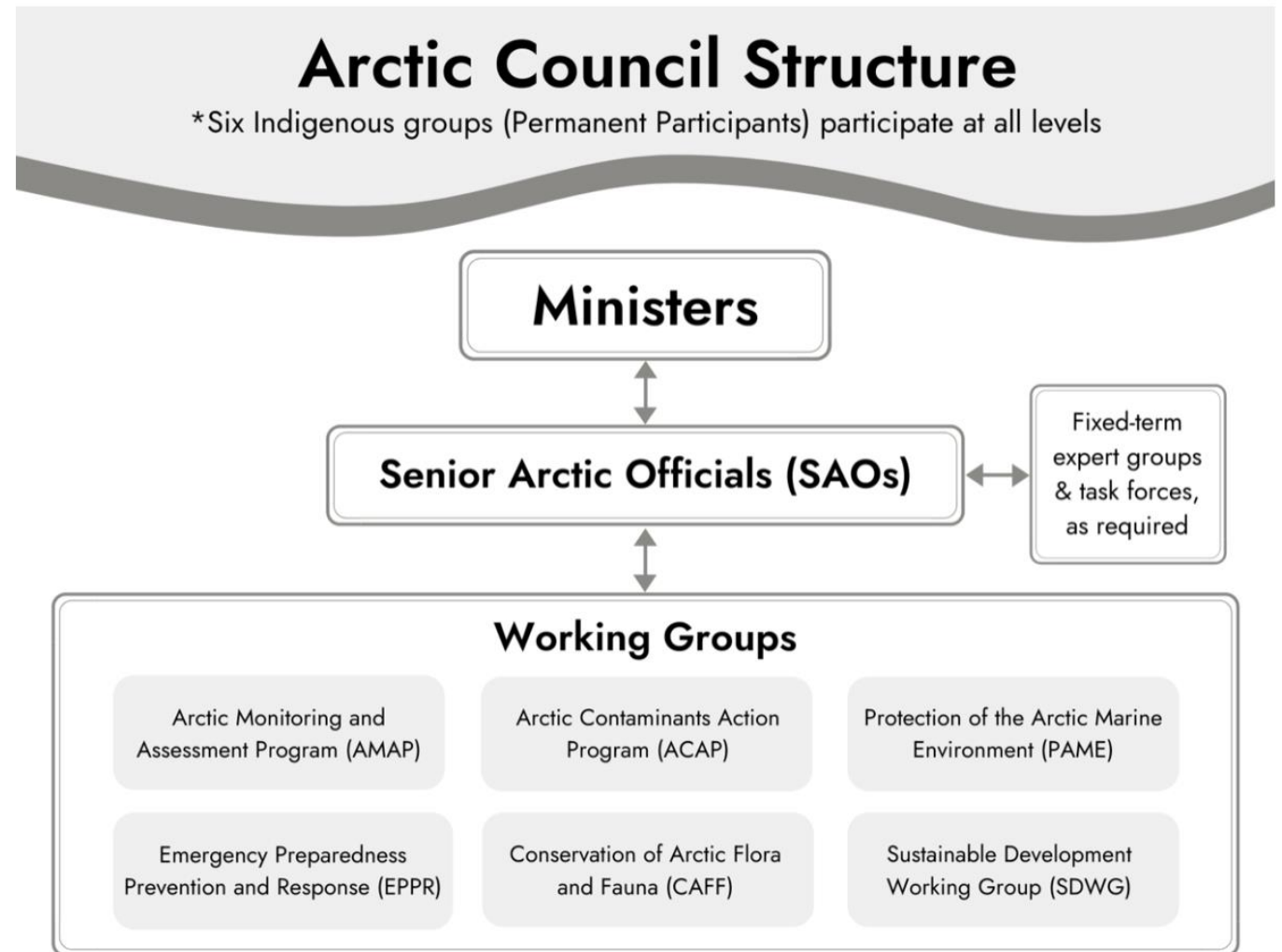


Figure from: Spence, J., Rødven, R., & Ågren, N. (2025). Enabling and Bridging Institutional Diversity Through Polycentric Governance Structures to Advance Sustainable Development. In H.M. Tuihedur Rahman & Ashlee-Ann Pigford (Eds.), *Institutional Diversity and Sustainable Environmental Management: Scalar, Cultural, and Functional Perspectives*, CRC Press.

Arctic Council Observers

Non-Arctic States:

- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Japan
- Netherlands
- China
- Poland
- India
- Republic of Korea
- Singapore
- Spain
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom

Intergovernmental and Interparliamentary Organizations:

- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
- International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- International Maritime Organization
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- Nordic Council of Ministers
- Nordic Environment and Finance Corporation
- North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission
- OSPAR Commission
- Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations Environment Programme
- World Meteorological Organization
- West Nordic Council

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

- Advisory Committee on protection of the Sea
- Arctic Institute of North America
- Association of World Reindeer Herders
- Circumpolar Conservation Union
- International Arctic Science Committee
- International Arctic Social Sciences Association
- International Union for Circumpolar Health
- International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
- Northern Forum
- Oceana
- University of the Arctic
- World Wildlife Fund for Nature, Arctic Programme (WWF)



Key Areas of Effort

- Climate Change and Environmental Protection
- Sustainable Development
- Emergency Preparedness and Pollution Control
- Community Well-Being

Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program

Projects Include:

- Arctic Marine Microplastic and Litter
- Contaminant Issues: PoPs and Mercury
- Climate Issues: Cryosphere, Meteorology, Ecosystem Impacts
- Biosecurity in the Arctic
- Addressing Contaminants and Human Health Issues
- Air Pollution with a Focus on Short-Lived Climate Forcers
- Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks





AC
AP

Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP)

Projects Include:

- The Tundra Project
- Circumpolar Local Environmental Observer Network
- Arctic Black Carbon Case Studies Platform
- Solid Waste Management in Remote Arctic Communities
- Community-Based Black Carbon and Public Health Assessment
- Promotion of Decreased Pollution in the Arctic Region with the Introduction of Best Available Techniques

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

Projects Include:

- Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative
- Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program
- Protection from Invasive Species
- Arctic Biodiversity Data Service
- Mainstreaming Arctic Biodiversity
- Resilience and Management of Arctic Wetlands
- Marine Biodiversity Monitoring



The logo for EPPRR (Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response) is displayed in a large, bold, maroon font. The letters are arranged in two rows: 'E P' on the top row and 'P R' on the bottom row. The entire logo is enclosed within a maroon border that forms a house-like shape, with a vertical line on the left, a horizontal line at the bottom, and a diagonal line on the right that meets the top horizontal line.

Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR)

Projects Include:

- Prevention, Preparedness and Response for Small Communities
- Arctic Marine Risk Assessment
- Arctic Rescue
- Circumpolar Wildland Fire
- Circumpolar Oil Spill Response Viability Analysis
- Safety Systems in Implementation of Economic and Infrastructural Projects



Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)

Projects Include:

- Protection from Invasive Species
- Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter
- Arctic Ship Traffic Data
- Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum
- Underwater Noise in the Arctic
- Arctic Marine Tourism: Development in the Arctic and Enabling Real Change
- Integrated Ecosystem Assessment of the Central Arctic Ocean



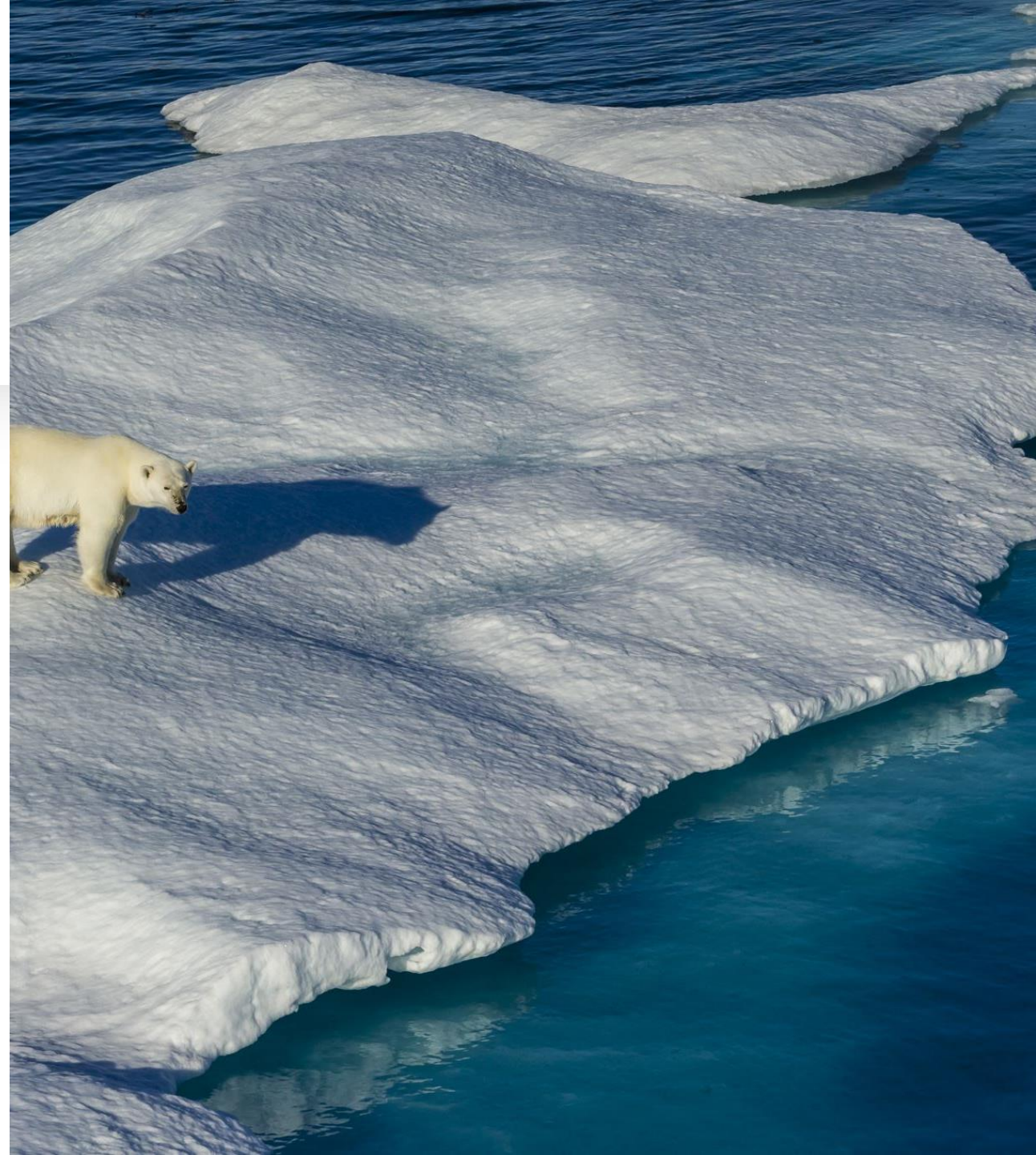
Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

Projects Include:

- Blue Bioeconomy in the Arctic Region
- Indigenous Youth, Food Knowledge and Arctic Change
- Project CREATEs
- Good Practices for Impact Assessments and Engagement
- Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy
- Arctic Resilience Action Framework

Achievements of the Arctic Council

- The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (2004)
- Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (signed in Nuuk, Greenland, 2011)
- The Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (signed in Kiruna, Sweden in 2013)
- Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation (signed in Fairbanks, Alaska in 2017).
- Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum in 2017
- Snow, Water, Ice, and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA) Report (2021)



Future of Arctic Council in doubt after end of Russian chairship

Co-operation with Russia has been formally suspended since 2022 invasion of Ukraine

John Last · CBC News · Posted: May 11, 2023 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: May 11, 2023



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, centre, arrives for the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Reykjavik, on May 20, 2021. Russia is now passing the chairship of the Arctic Council on to Norway. Geopolitical experts are concerned about co-operation with Russia going forward in light of the invasion of Ukraine. (Photo: Saul Loeb/ Associated Press)

Russian officials call Arctic Council boycott 'regrettable'

By Gloria Dickie March 4, 2022 1:04 PM EST · Updated 3 years ago

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Foreign Ministers attend the Arctic Council summit at the Lappi Arena in Rovaniemi, Finland May 7, 2019. Mandel Ngan/Pool via REUTERS/ Purchase Licensing Rights

- Summary**
- Russia calls council's actions "regrettable"
 - Russian Arctic officials will proceed with events alone
 - Will refocus chairmanship duties on domestic needs

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Arctic Council Paused: The Search for A Future for Arctic Cooperation Continues



From the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Reykjavik in 2021. (Photo: Gunnar Vigfusson, Icelandic MFA)



The Arctic Circle Assembly 2024

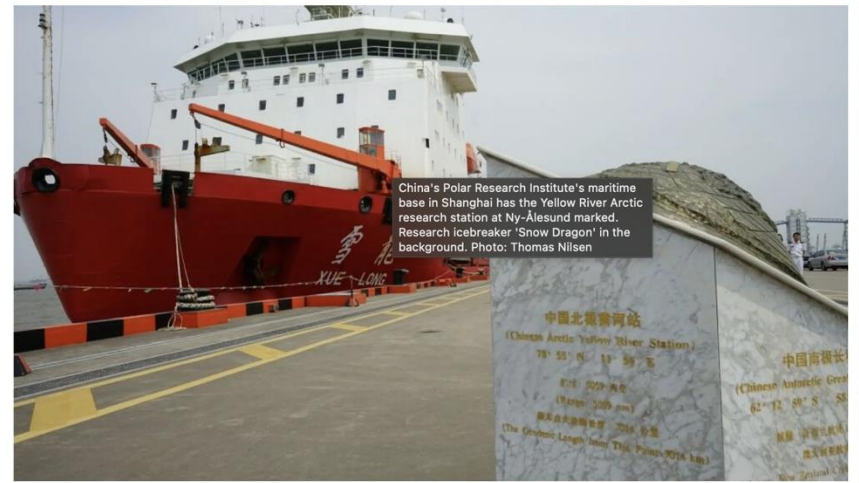
"China's Intentions in The Arctic Are Unclear - And That is a Growing Concern"



Admiral Rob Bauer (Royal Netherlands Navy) is the 33rd Chair of the Military Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As the Military Adviser to the Secretary General and the North Atlantic Council, Bauer is NATO's most senior military officer. (Photo: Trine Jonassen)

Русский

Search...



China's Polar Research Institute's maritime base in Shanghai has the Yellow River Arctic research station at Ny-Ålesund marked. Research icebreaker 'Snow Dragon' in the background. Photo: Thomas Nilsen

China's Polar Research Institute's maritime base in Shanghai has the Yellow River Arctic research station at Ny-Ålesund marked. Research icebreaker "Snow Dragon" in the background. Photo: Thomas Nilsen

A Sino-Russian Arctic alliance?

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent halt in cooperation with the other Arctic states, Russia has turned east and south for new partners. At the same time, Russia is messaging actively that the Arctic Council without Russia is illegitimate. What is Russia's posture in Arctic affairs in the new era of growing instability and geopolitical tensions? And how does China - Russia's primary choice among potential new partners - react to Russia's invitations?

Kari Aga Myklebost

Marc Lanteigne

World / China

China's Coast Guard claims to have entered the Arctic Ocean for the first time as it ramps up security ties with Russia

By Simone McCarthy, CNN

6 minute read · Published 3:03 AM EDT, Thu October 3, 2024



Members of the China Coast Guard stand in formation during a joint patrol with Russia that China says entered the Arctic Ocean. China Coast Guard

Implications of Great Power Competition on the Future of Arctic Governance

Greenland

HOME › OPINIONS

Inuit Circumpolar Council: "There Is No Such Thing as The Better Colonizer"



Children and their parents walking in Ilulissat, Greenland. (Illustration photo: Vincent van Zeijst, Wikimedia commons)



"We do not wish to debate which state is better or worse to live in or is a better or worse colonizer. Rather we want to debate how we improve Inuit lives, livelihoods, wellbeing, and self-determination across all our regions. A peaceful Arctic through mutually respectful cooperation", the Inuit Circumpolar Council says in a statement.

Trump interest in buying Greenland 'not a joke', Rubio says

By Reuters

January 30, 2025 3:41 PM EST · Updated 11 days ago



Greenland's flag flies in Igaiku settlement, Greenland, July 5, 2024. Ritzau Scanpix/Ida Marie Odgaard via REUTERS/File Photo/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights

Implications for Arctic Indigenous Peoples

- Loss of collaborative decision-making that includes Indigenous Peoples at the highest levels
- Disruptions to climate and environmental research and knowledge exchange
- Impacts on Sustainable Development initiatives



Image: Arctic Council Secretariat



Implications for Canada

Two Key Policies:

- Department of National Defence's defence policy update *Our North, Strong and Free*
- Global Affairs's *Arctic Foreign Policy*

Main Areas of Increasing Concern:

- Strategic competition in the Arctic and around the world
- Complexity
- Global Instability

Canadian Responses

Some Highlights:

- Improve domestic capabilities so Canada can be a better security partner internationally
- Improve and advance international diplomacy in the Arctic to ensure Canadian values are represented in the world
- Invest in the Arctic Council to ensure it is a leading forum
- Increase participation of Indigenous Peoples and other northerners in decision-making

Concluding Thoughts

- The Arctic Council's survival must remain in every country's interest
- Losing the Arctic Council would be a major loss for collaborative research and decision-making
- Some Positives:
 - The Arctic Council remains the best platform for international cooperation in the region
 - The legacy of the Arctic Council's framework producing a high level of peaceful cooperation over almost 3 decades will remain
 - This is an opportunity for the Council to evolve to be more representative of the rights and responsibilities that the Permanent Participant organizations have in their homeland