



# G20

TOPIC A:

## **Global economic implications on the extraction of natural resources in Antarctica.**

**Undersecretary:**

David Rogelio Campos Muriá

# INTRODUCTION

At the north pole of Earth, lies the Arctic Region. It is made up of ocean and ice and surrounded by Russia, Canada, Norway, Greenland, and the USA. Passages of water located between the pole and continental mainlands are usable for merchant ships when the ice melts during the summer season. Global warming and increasing temperatures have caused ice sheets to decrease in size, thus allowing these routes to remain navigable for longer periods of time. As this happens, the northern countries are in the pursuit of controlling a potential trade route that can significantly reduce time travel for ships moving between Asian and Western markets. This route has a huge potential for the trading market.

## BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The Arctic is believed to be prosperous in natural resources, having control over this area has been a priority for the countries that make up the Arctic Circle, the ones mentioned above. These nations have established several strategies to claim strategic parts of the region, one of the most recent ones is proving the extension of their continental shelf. A continental shelf is a part of a country's overall landmass; it is just covered by the ocean. Investigations have been conducted by the countries interested, in order to gather information on the extension of their continental shelf. Claims have already been submitted, but as of 2019, only Norway's claims have been recognized. Russia, Denmark (via Greenland), and Canada have submitted claims that overlap significantly and that are waiting for approval. However, the committee is only meant to validate the data gathered, not establish new borders. Countries must have their diplomats negotiate the distribution of the area. As of September 2019, they have failed to reach an agreement.

Military exercises have been conducted by Russia in the Arctic Region, as well as building military bases and reconditioning old Soviet facilities near the northern coastline. This situation has gotten into deeper tights with China, which also seems to be very interested in having influence in the region. In 2019 the annual report of the Pentagon included for the first time a section about the Arctic and warned of the risks of growing Chinese presence, including the possible militarization of the region in the near future.

### The Case with China:

China is not a current member of the Arctic Circle. The Chinese have been swiftly increasing their influence and also have built scientific facilities in Iceland, as well as partnered with an Australian company to study and extract resources off glaciers in Greenland. Most importantly, the country has also gotten into deeper tights with Russia, and in June 2019 the two nations signed a cooperation treaty to work in the region.

### Russia's "Provocative Actions":

The Russian Federation has been updating military equipment in the region. Military bases, radar systems, anti-air missiles, submarines, and a squadron of SU-34 fighter jets are operating and patrolling it. Nothing can travel through the Northern Sea Route without Russia knowing. There was a mobilization of over 30,000 troops to be part of a series of military exercises that have an undeclared purpose. The Kremlin has been also causing international concern, as intelligence shows tests for a nuclear-powered missile that could in theory have an unlimited range. The Russian government has denied answering any questions on the topic, even after a reported accident with the project that resulted in the death of at least 5 engineers. These are not the first controversial events in the Arctic region by the Russian Federation. In 2007 they sent an unmanned submarine to plant a flag underwater below the North Pole, with the explorers declaring “The Arctic is ours.” Canada has also reported several incursions of Russian planes flying over North Canadian waters. More than once these have been intercepted and escorted away by Canadian F-18 fighter planes.

#### USA Perception:

The American government has been actively calling for the attention of the international community regarding the actions of Russia, China, and even Canada. The US Secretary of State has deemed the continental shelf claims of these countries as “illegitimate” and said that their activities in the north are to be “examined closely”.

#### What Else is at Stake?:

A US-led geological study threw previously unknown information that might be key to understanding why countries are willing to invest in controlling as much of the Arctic regions as possible. The study estimates that the Arctic might hold up to 1,670 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 90 billion barrels of oil, equaling 30 percent of the world's undiscovered gas and 13 percent of its undiscovered oil. These resources will be ever more recoverable and easier to transport because of the increasing facilitation of access to the Northwest Passage, which was once mostly frozen throughout the year and navigable only by heavy-duty icebreakers. With these resources being basically up for grabs, countries are using strategies such as the continental shelf claims to try and get legitimate access to extract them.

## UNITED NATIONS INTERVENTION

As tensions increase and the ice continues to melt, it is important that as the representatives of some of the world's most powerful economies, the members of the Group of 20 are capable of reaching an agreement on what must be done in order to prevent any possible conflict in the area, while at the same time avoiding to affect legitimate commerce operations already taking place.

# POINTS TO CONSIDER

Why is control over the Arctic so important?

Why does the US see the increasing presence of China and Russia in the Arctic as a threat?

What measures should be taken to avoid further conflict?

Questionnaire:

What is my country's position?

How can my country help

What are my country's policies?

Which countries can my delegation work with?

What are three possible solutions?

## QUESTIONNAIRE

A. What is my country's position?

B. What are my country's policies?

C. What can my country do to solve this issue?

D. Which countries can my delegation work with?

E. What are three possible solutions?

F. What has been done to solve the problem?

## USEFUL LINKS

It's Time to Draw Borders in the Arctic Ocean, Vox, October 2017, retrieved September 20th 2019 from:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx\\_2SVm9Jgo&t=602s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx_2SVm9Jgo&t=602s)

Latest Arena for China's Growing Global Ambitions: The Arctic, Sengupta/Lee Myers, The New York Times, nytimes.com, May 2019, retrieved September the 20th from:  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/24/climate/china-arctic.html>

Meeting Russias Arctic Aggression, Dowd/Moens, Fraser Institute, fraserinstitute.org, 2017, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/article/meeting-russias-arctic-aggression>

US warns Beijing's Arctic activity risks creating 'new South China Sea', The Guardian, theguardian.com, May 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/06/pompeo-arctic-activity-new-south-china-sea>  
China's Scientists Are the New Kids on the Arctic Block, Niiler, WIRED, wired.com, July 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from:  
<https://www.wired.com/story/chinas-scientists-are-the-new-kids-on-the-arctic-block/>

Rocket mystery: What weapon was Russia testing in Arctic?, BBC, bbc.com, August 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49319160>

Chinese Activity in the Arctic, Molenaars, Global Risks Insights, globalriskinsights.com, June 3rd 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://globalriskinsights.com/2019/06/chinese-us-arctic/>

China's Emerging Strategies in the Arctic, Lanteigne, High North News, highnorthnews.com, April 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.highbnorthnews.com/en/chinas-emerging-strategies-arctic>

Russia Establishes New Arctic Air Squadron to Protect Its Northern Sea Route, The Moscow Times, themoscowtimes.com, July 22 2019, retrieved September 20th from: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/07/22/russia-establishes-new-arctic-air-squadron-to-protect-its-northern-sea-route-a66517>

Rocket mystery: What weapon was Russia testing in Arctic?, BBC, bbc.com, August 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49319160>

Divining Russia's Intentions in the Arctic, Cross, The Maritime Executive, maritime-executive.com, July 2017, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/divining-russia-s-intentions-in-the-arctic>

Moscow close to UN recognition that its continental shelf extends far into the Arctic, Goble, EuroMaidan Express, euromaidanexpress.com, April 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <http://euromaidanpress.com/2019/04/06/moscow-close-to-un-recognition-that-its-continental-shelf-extends-far-into-the-arctic/>

Russia scores scientific point in quest for extended Arctic continental shelf, Sevunts, The Barents Observer, thebarentsobserver.com, April 2019, retrieved September 2019 from: <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2019/04/russia-scores-scientific-point-quest-extended-arctic-continental-shelf>

China and Russia want to develop Arctic energy resources together, and US disapproval may not deter them, Gasper, South China Morning Post, scmp.com, September 2018, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/asia/article/2163719/china-and-russia-want-develop-arctic-energy-resources>

Why China and Russia have their eyes on the Arctic, Zhou/Chen, Inkstone, inkstonenews.com, April 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.inkstonenews.com/politics/russia-and-china-make-progress-arctic-shipping-routes-development/article/3006918>

Pompeo calls out Canada, China, Russia over Arctic policy, Quinn, Radio Canada International, cbc.ca, May 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/pompeo-canada-russia-china-arctic-1.5125293>

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

It's Time to Draw Borders in the Arctic Ocean, Vox, October 2017, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx\\_2SVm9Jgo&t=602s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx_2SVm9Jgo&t=602s)

Latest Arena for China's Growing Global Ambitions: The Arctic, Sengupta/Lee Myers, The New York Times, nytimes.com, May 2019, retrieved September the 20th from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/24/climate/china-arctic.html>

Meeting Russias Arctic Aggression, Dowd/Moens, Fraser Institute, fraserinstitute.org, 2017, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/article/meeting-russias-arctic-aggression>

US warns Beijing's Arctic activity risks creating 'new South China Sea', The Guardian, theguardian.com, May 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/06/pompeo-arctic-activity-new-south-china-sea>

China's Scientists Are the New Kids on the Arctic Block, Niiler, WIRED, wired.com, July 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.wired.com/story/chinas-scientists-are-the-new-kids-on-the-arctic-block/>

Rocket mystery: What weapon was Russia testing in Arctic?, BBC, bbc.com, August 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49319160>

Chinese Activity in the Arctic, Molenaars, Global Risks Insights, globalriskinsights.com, June 3rd 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://globalriskinsights.com/2019/06/chinese-us-arctic/>

China's Emerging Strategies in the Arctic, Lanteigne, High North News, highnorthnews.com, April 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/chinas-emerging-strategies-arctic>

Russia Establishes New Arctic Air Squadron to Protect Its Northern Sea Route, The Moscow Times, themoscowtimes.com, July 22 2019, retrieved September 20th from: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/07/22/russia-establishes-new-arctic-air-squadron-to-protect-its-northern-sea-route-a66517>

Rocket mystery: What weapon was Russia testing in Arctic?, BBC, bbc.com, August 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49319160>

Divining Russia's Intentions in the Arctic, Cross, The Maritime Executive, maritime-executive.com, July 2017, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/divining-russia-s-intentions-in-the-arctic>

Moscow close to UN recognition that its continental shelf extends far into the Arctic, Goble, EuroMaidan Express, euromaidanexpress.com, April 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <http://euromaidanpress.com/2019/04/06/moscow-close-to-un-recognition-that-its-continental-shelf-extends-far-into-the-arctic/>

Russia scores scientific point in quest for extended Arctic continental shelf, Sevunts, The Barents Observer, thebarentsobserver.com, April 2019, retrieved September 2019 from: <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2019/04/russia-scores-scientific-point-quest-extended-arctic-continental-shelf>

China and Russia want to develop Arctic energy resources together, and US disapproval may not deter them, Gasper, South China Morning Post, scmp.com, September 2018, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/asia/article/2163719/china-and-russia-want-develop-arctic-energy-resources>

Why China and Russia have their eyes on the Arctic, Zhou/Chen, Inkstone, inkstonenews.com, April 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.inkstonenews.com/politics/russia-and-china-make-progress-arctic-shipping-routes-development/article/3006918>

Pompeo calls out Canada, China, Russia over Arctic policy, Quinn, Radio Canada International, cbc.ca, May 2019, retrieved September 20th 2019 from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/pompeo-canada-russia-china-arctic-1.5125293>