

Third Annual Climate Science and Policy Conference, UC Santa Cruz: *Earth's Climate Future: Unchartered Territory*

Geopolitics of Climate Change: The Arctic Case

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I. Geopolitics and Grand Strategies

Key question suggested by Simon Dalby (2010): What is the proper location of the appropriate political authority to make the necessary policy changes need to respond to climate change?

Traditionally geopolitics is about power and how power is used to promote rules and practices that determine who rules in a given geographic and policy area.

Geopolitical landscape is all about states and territories and environmental security is all about new security challenges to the nation-states

Climate change does not respect national boundaries and raises security issues that may not fit with traditional security strategies. Climate change is about humanity and human security. Fundamentally it is all about how do we manage the biosphere that is being transformed by the choices we have made in our various human communities.

Recent Paris talks did not result in the creation of institutions of global governance to formulate and implement an effective global climate policy-national interests and action prevailed with no enforcement mechanisms.

II. How climate change shapes geopolitical thinking and grand strategy narratives

Traditional security and foreign policy grand strategies and narratives:

Primacy-seek dominance in strategic debates and policy issue areas/absolute and relative power
Selective Engagement-a real focus on areas of national interest narrowly defined/niche diplomacy
Cooperative Security-often referred to as common security-collective action in critical security areas

Climate change has global biosphere effects and thus transcends national boundaries but the dominant security narratives are still state-centric and international cooperation is limited due to national interests and sovereignty concerns.

Climate geopolitics will require a refocus on traditional *human security* goals and a human security narrative with an emphasis on the seven security goals raised by the UN Development Report of 1994: *economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.*

A new grand strategy might be based on Castells' *network state* (2004): shared sovereignty and responsibility; flexibility of procedures of governance; tri-sector cooperation-public, private and citizen sector; and a redefinition of and creation of new regional and global institutions.

A number of common security and common global challenges projects from the end of WWII through the 1990s failed to attract support from major powers. How likely is support for the network state and a rethinking of grand strategy narratives?

A possible way forward is the creation of regional organizations like the Arctic Council that does not focus on military security issues and includes nation states, indigenous communities, and civil society actors in their policy

III. The Arctic States and the Arctic Council: A Model for Other Common Resource Areas

The **Circumpolar North has begun to acquire an identity of its own in the minds of policymakers and scholars alike**. Yet this region cannot be understood properly as a cockpit or as an arena or global commons. **Instead it belongs to the class of shared resource regions**, a category of areas that is acquiring more prominence as the attention of policymakers shifts increasingly to issues involving human/environment relations. Oran R. Young (1992)

The endless discussions of potential geopolitical conflicts in the Arctic reproduce the tropes of military fronts, spatial control and imperial rivalry in an arena where all this is unlikely. Simon Dalby (2010)

Background

The Arctic – covers >1/6 of Earth's landmass and is home to about 4 million people, including 30 different Indigenous Peoples

Represents a special challenge for governance: It is a region defined by the sovereign interests of eight states and the regions environmental health has implications for the entire world. Further, its members include two great powers with competing strategic interests and six other members with political traditions that tend toward cooperation and shared governance. A new element is the increasing interest of outside powers such as China and India.

Arctic Council (est. 1996 in Ottawa, Canada) – a high-level, intergovernmental forum for political and scientific discussion on issues common to the governments of the Arctic region and its inhabitants

Eight member states: Canada, Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US

Six Permanent First People Indigenous Groups

Observers include:

Nine Intergovernmental Groups

Eleven NGOs

Twelve Non-Arctic States

Engage in issues such as:

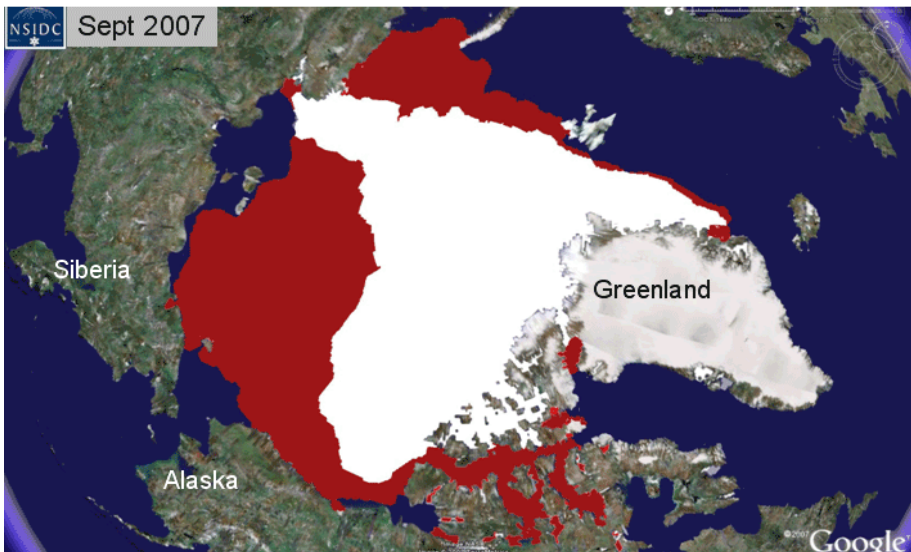
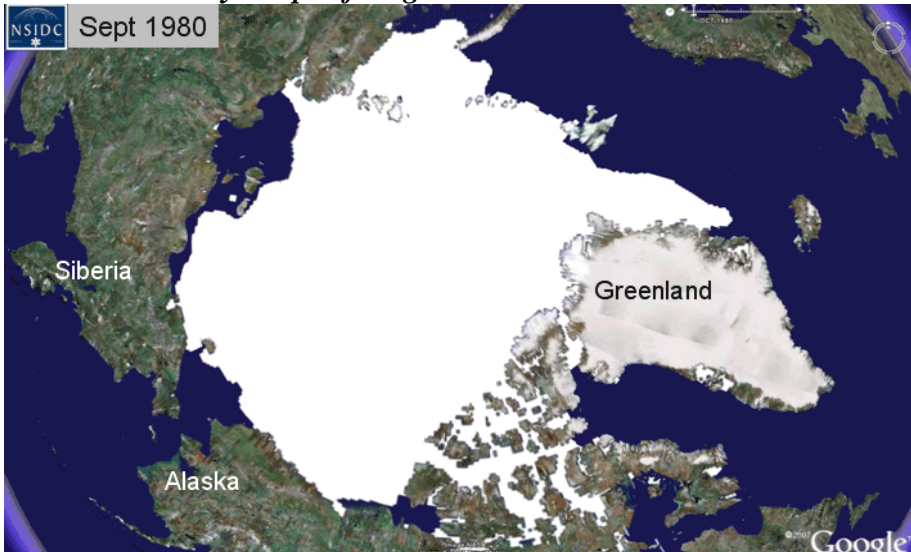
- Monitoring, assessing and preventing pollution in the Arctic
- Climate change
- Biodiversity conservation
- Sustaining use of resources
- Emergency preparedness and prevention
- Living conditions of Arctic residents

Provide knowledge, advice, and recommendations to the Arctic Council.

- Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP)
- Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP)
- Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)
- Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)
- Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

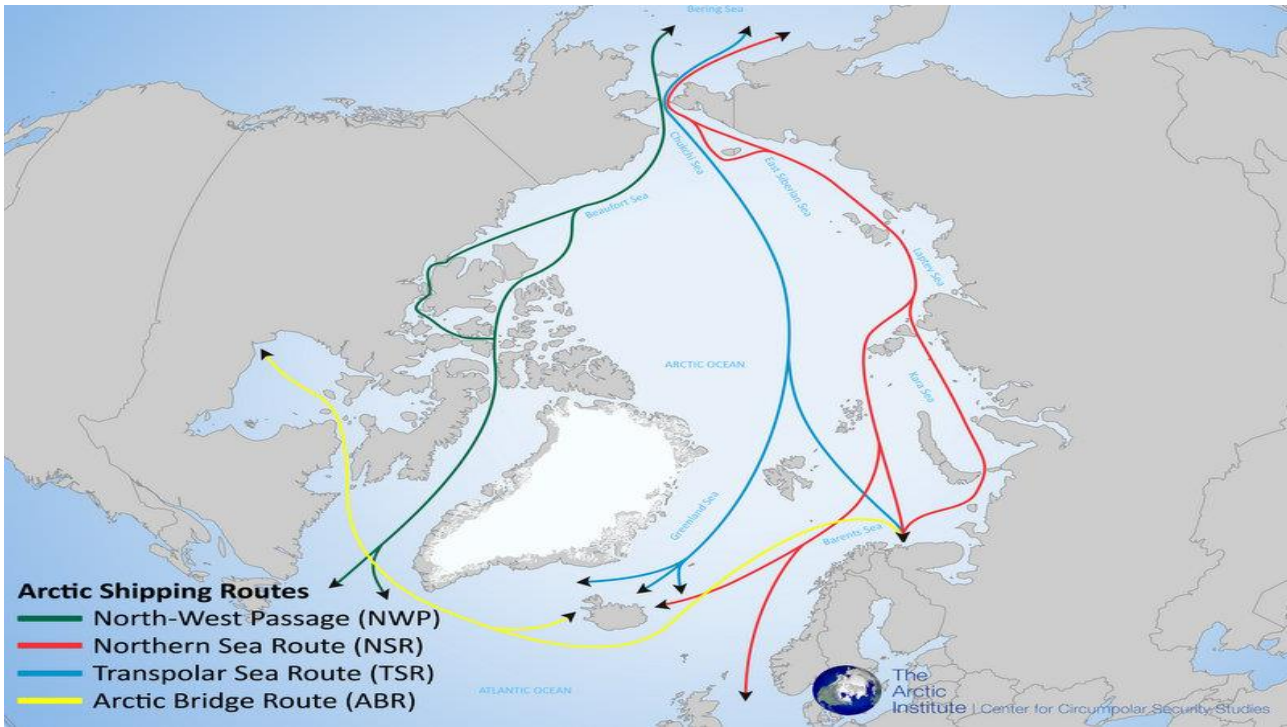
Shrinking Arctic Sea Ice 1980-2007

Source: US Army Corps of Engineers

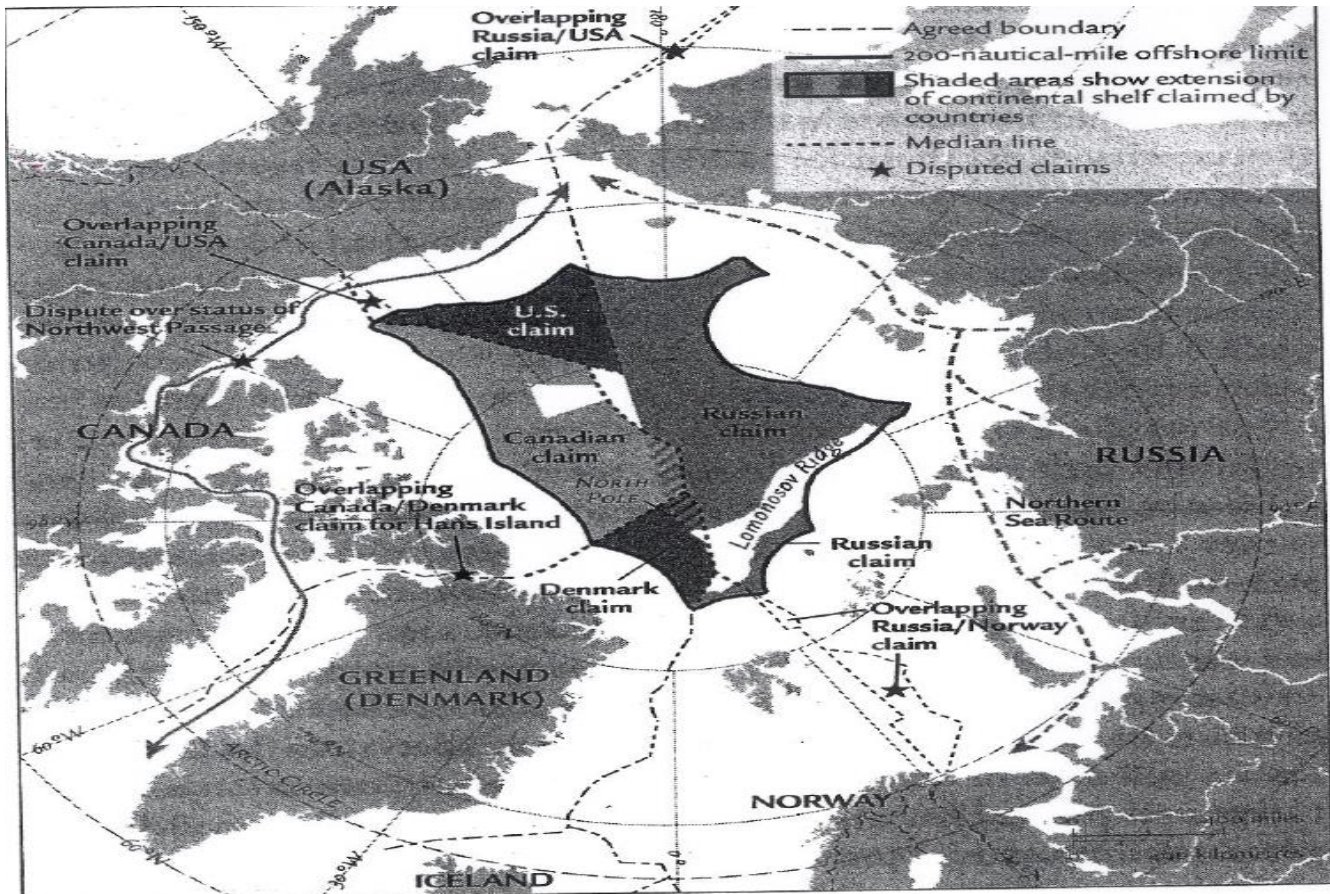


Potential New shipping routes

Source: The Arctic Institute



Disputed Claims in the Circumpolar Arctic, 2009





Strategic Priorities and Policy Objectives

Canada's Northern Strategy

- Arctic Sovereignty
- Social and Economic Development
- Protecting the North's Environmental Heritage
- Devolution of Governance to Indigenous Populations

Denmark's Strategy for the Arctic, 2011-2020

- Peaceful and Secure Arctic
- Sustainable Growth and Self-Reliance
- Cooperation with International Partners
- Respect for Arctic Environmental Fragility

Finland's Arctic Strategy

- Protecting the Environment
- Economic Development
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Indigenous Peoples

Iceland's Arctic Strategy

- International Cooperation
- Security – collective and cooperative

- Resource Development and Environmental Protection

Norwegian High North Strategy

- Develop knowledge about climate change and the environment of the High North
- Monitoring and emergency response and maritime safety systems in Northern waters
- Promote sustainable use of off-shore oil and gas and renewable marine sources
- Develop infrastructure in North
- Exercise sovereignty firmly and strengthen cooperation with Russia

Russian State Policy

- Interact with other Arctic states to define sovereignty of maritime areas on the basis of norms of international law
- Create Arctic search and rescue and prevention of man-caused accidents
- Manage cross-polar air routes and northern sea routes
- Strengthen bilateral and multilateral relationships

Sweden's Strategy for the Arctic Region

- Climate Change
- Economic Development
- The Human Dimension of Arctic Development

U.S. Arctic Policy

- National security and homeland security
- Global governance
- Boundary issues and extended continental shelf controversies
- Scientific cooperation

European Union

- Protecting and preserving the Arctic environment and its population
- Promoting sustainable resource use
- Enhancing Arctic multilateral governance

Future Scenarios:

1. A scramble for scarce natural resources
2. Increased functional cooperation through the EU, Nordic Council, UNEP and UNDP
3. Renewed superpower rivalry and a hardening of the spheres of influence
4. Human Security narrative with network global governance-linked with other common resource areas