

Russia's Arctic Policy: Current Trends and Future Prospects

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“Governing the Far North: Assessing Cooperation
Between Arctic and Non-Arctic Nations”

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Russian Presence in the Region: Key Milestones

- 1910 - Russian Navy sent to explore the Northern Sea Route (NSR); first territorial claim made in 1916.
- 1926 - Moscow declared as Soviet territory any landmass

Importance of the Arctic for Russia

- Climate change as a challenge and opportunity.
- Economic engine: the region produces 11 % of Russia's GDP and contributes 22 % to its growth.
- Resource base: up to 80 % of Russia's discovered industrial gas potential. Important deposits of other mineral and biological resources.
- Location: Open access to 3 oceans, base of strategic nuclear submarines and the Northern Fleet.
- Transport corridor - NSR reduces the distance between Rotterdam and Yokohama by 34 %.
- Protection of an extensive borderline (over 17,500 km).

Multilateral cooperation in the Arctic: Declared Russian Priorities

- Good relations with neighbors: delimitation agreement with Norway reached in September 2010.
- Importance of international organizations, such as the Arctic Council and Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)
- Protection of indigenous populations was one of the key priorities of Russian BEAC Presidency
- For Russia, environmental protection is the key pre-condition for a new ‘sustainable economic growth’
- Russia initiated regional systems for prevention of technological disasters and supported U.S. (and originally Russian) initiatives on Search & Rescue (Sea & Air)

Current and potential issues of

Russian State Arctic Policy 2020 Priorities

- The Arctic is set to become

Russia's Arctic Potential and Its Shortcomings

- Large polar class field fleet (7 nuclear icebreakers), including the biggest “50 Years of Victory” plus a number of vessels owned by private companies.
- Extensive geological and geographic knowledge of the Arctic, comprehensive Arctic policy, polar class industry and relevant policy mechanisms. Good research and scientific capacity.
- Lack of practical industrial ‘know how’ and sufficient investment. Lack of clarity about implementation of the ‘Yamal Program’
- Border protection/territorial control issues, environmental protection issues, depopulation.

Questions for the future

- Would the UNCLOS be the single source of law for the delimitation?
- Which governance for the Arctic?
- How to deal with the third countries' presence (if any)?
- How would U.S. – Russia / EU - Russia relations impact the regional developments in the Arctic? Would it be possible for Moscow to spread positive trends in Norway – Russia relations to relations with other countries?

THANK YOU!

Q & A