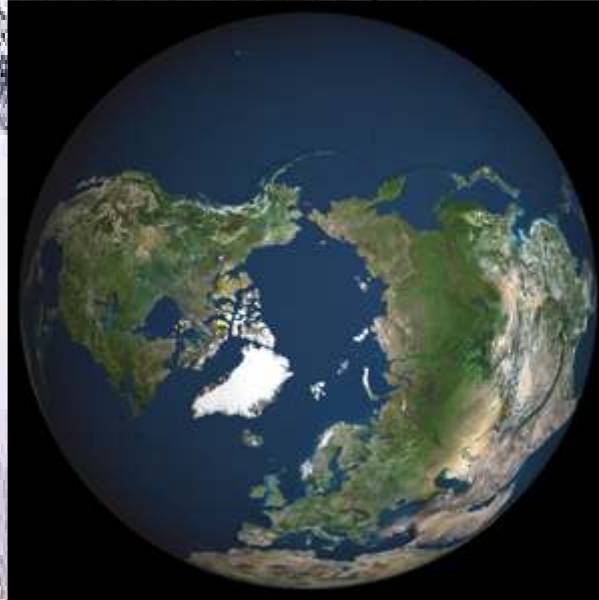


**Russia and the Arctic Circle: *let's call it an Arctic Race***  
**A quick review on the problem.**



**1 satellite view of the North Pole**

**Source: <http://www.maps.com/map.aspx?pid=16462>**

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### *North Pole's anatomy<sup>1</sup>*

The legal status of the two poles (North Pole and South Pole) lying diametrically opposite on planet Earth's axis of rotation differs widely, due to different geographical, geological and political conditions.

North and South Pole's only common features seem to be their location<sup>2</sup>, the common climate conditions<sup>3</sup> and the common unfavourable weather conditions.

Such conditions led to an absence of sovereignty claims at these regions and to a very limited presence of mankind up and down there for centuries.

The North Pole –or arctic zone- is the northern most point on Earth defining latitude 90° North. Up there, all meridians of longitude converge and start. It is covered with drifting pack ice and “faces” six months of constant sunlight and six of total darkness.

Winter (January) temperatures at the North Pole can range from about –43 °C (–45 °F) to –26 °C (–15 °F). Summer temperatures (from June until August) average around the freezing point 0 °C (32 °F). The North Pole is significantly warmer than the South Pole because it lies at sea

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<sup>1</sup> About the legal status, see Ioannou K.- Economides K.- Rozakis Ch.-Fatouros A., *Public International Law*, (Athens-Komotini, publ. Sakoulas, 1991, 91-93 pp.) , for more about North Pole's “anatomy”, look in Sci-tech Encyclopedia and Britannica Concise Encyclopedia for the link *North Pole*.

<sup>2</sup> They are located symmetrically at both ends of the earth's axis of rotation.

<sup>3</sup> ...such as the constant presence of ice and the low temperatures.

level in the middle of an ocean (which acts as a reservoir of heat), rather than at altitude in a continental land mass.

The sea depth has been measured at 4,261 meters (13,980 ft). The nearest land is said to be Kaffeklubben Island, off the northern coast of Greenland about 440 miles (c. 700 km) away.

The Geographical North Pole does not coincide neither with the North Magnetic Pole (Canadian Archipelago) nor with the North Geomagnetic Pole.

By extension, the arctic zone, inside the arctic circle, is consisted of sea (the Arctic Ocean), continents' territories (America, Europe, Asia), islands relatively close to the continents as well as permanently cold, ice encrusted areas of the Arctic Ocean that become more condense when we approach the center of the North Pole.

As far as it concerns the continents' territories, there are no controversial sovereignty claims. The USA (through Alaska), Canada, Denmark (through Greenland), Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Federation possess territories or near islands inside the Arctic Circle<sup>4</sup>.

On the other hand, there are basic uncertainties arising as far as it concerns the legal status of remote areas located far away from the circumpolar states' territories and approaching the center of the Geographical North Pole.

Under the Domain theory<sup>5</sup>, all parts of territory (in the Arctic Ocean in this case) that consist a physical projection of the continental regions' territories, belong to the states located in the continents closer to these parts of territory.

The theory was supported by the Soviet Union for obvious reasons; the Soviet Union had very extended northern coasts in Asia.

This theory lies against states that try to gain sovereignty by occupation and against states that even though possess territories in the region, have

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<sup>4</sup> For more about Greenland and the Spitzberg Archipelago, see Ioannou K. and others, *Public International Law* (note No. 1).

<sup>5</sup> That theory was supported by Canada from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in order to find a legal proof with the purpose to base sovereignty claims over small remote islands or island groups.

limited coasts, fact that prevents an extensive projection<sup>6</sup>. Finally, it is generally accepted that the territories inside the domains belong *de facto* to the corresponding states.

### *A piece of history*

Up until 160 million years ago, Antarctica, along with Australia, Africa, South America, Madagascar and India, formed part of a single continent - a sort of super-continent – called Gondwana. The final parameter providing the proof that Antarctica was once part of Gondwana has to do with bathymetric readings<sup>7</sup>.

As early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, people have been struggling to learn more about the 6<sup>th</sup> continent and why not to reach-conquer it. Since that time, many brave explorers and navigators have oriented to the north organizing several expeditions trying to find a passage through ice floes at certain-favorable times of the year in the so-called Polynia or circumpolar sea. For the expeditions, whaling ships, a common mean in the northern latitudes, were mostly used<sup>8</sup>.

Many explorers and others now and then claimed to have been the first to reach or cross the pole somehow. However, many of these declarations raise controversies.

The American explorer Frederick Albert Cook<sup>9</sup> was the first to claim to have reached the North Pole on April 21, 1908 with two Inuit men<sup>10</sup>, Ahwelah and Etukishook, but he was unable to produce convincing proof and his claim is not widely accepted.

The conquest of the North Pole was for many years credited to American Navy engineer Robert Edwin Peary<sup>11</sup>, who claimed to have

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<sup>6</sup> ...for example, Norway, Denmark and the USA face a problem in comparison to Russia.

<sup>7</sup> “The continent and its islands”, [http://www.antarctica.org/old/UK/Envirn/pag/foret\\_glaces\\_UK.htm](http://www.antarctica.org/old/UK/Envirn/pag/foret_glaces_UK.htm) .

<sup>8</sup> John K. Wright *Geographical Review*, Vol. 43, No. 3. (Jul., 1953), pp. 338-365 “The Open Polar Sea”.

<sup>9</sup> Deep Ocean Expeditions 2005, “The North Pole Dive”,  
<http://www.deepoceanexpeditions.com/northpole2.html>

<sup>10</sup> For more on Inuit and Inuit life, see Welcome to inuitpeople.com <http://www.inuitpeople.com/>,  
Günter Cornett “The Inuit, hunters of the Arctic”,  
[http://www.bambusspiele.de/spiele/nanuuk/e\\_nunavut.htm](http://www.bambusspiele.de/spiele/nanuuk/e_nunavut.htm),, wise geek, “Who are the Inuit people?”,  
<http://www.wisegeek.com/who-are-the-inuit-people.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project, “Peary Claims the North Pole (1898-1909)”,  
[http://www.whoi.edu/beaufortgyre/history/history\\_peary.html](http://www.whoi.edu/beaufortgyre/history/history_peary.html)

reached the Pole on April 6, 1909, accompanied by American Matthew Henson and four Inuit men named Ootah, Seeglo, Egigingwah, and Ooqueah. However, Peary's claim also remains controversial.

The British explorer Sir Wally Herbert<sup>12</sup>, initially a supporter of Peary, researched Peary's records in 1989 and concluded that they must have been falsified and that Peary had not reached the Pole. He then organized a four man dogsled expedition from Alaska across the Arctic sea to Norway<sup>13</sup>.

The first claimed flight over the Pole was made on May 9, 1926 by US naval officer Richard E. Byrd<sup>14</sup> and co-pilot Floyd Bennett. Although verified at the time by the US Navy and a committee of the National Geographic Society, this claim has since been disputed<sup>15</sup>.

The first undisputed sighting of the Pole was on May 12, 1926 by Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen<sup>16</sup> and his American sponsor Lincoln Ellsworth from the airship Norge.

According to sources and apart from Peary's disputed claim, the first men to approach the North Pole were a *Soviet Union party*. These are variously described as including Pavel Geordiyenko and<sup>17</sup> some others, or Aleksandr Kuznetsov and others, who landed a plane(s) there on April 23, 1948.

Many sources confess that the first confirmed surface conquest of the North Pole was that of Ralph Plaisted<sup>18</sup>, Walt Pederson, Gerry Pitzl and Jean Luc Bombardier, who traveled over the ice by snowmobile and arrived on April 19, 1968.

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<sup>12</sup> Sir Wally Herbert's site, <http://sirwallyherbert.com/> and "Sir Wally Herbert", The Independent, Saturday 16 June 2007, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/sir-wally-herbert-453324.html> .

<sup>13</sup> Deep Ocean Expeditions 2005, "The North Pole Dive"  
<http://www.deepoceanexpeditions.com/northpole2.html> .

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> "The North Pole Flight of Richard E. Byrd", The Ohio State University,  
<http://library.osu.edu/sites/archives/polar/flight/controversy.php>

<sup>16</sup> For more on Roald Amundsen, see Norway-the official site in the uk,  
<http://www.norway.org.uk/search/search.aspx?query=amundsen> .

<sup>17</sup> Guinness Book of Records, 1998 edition, Concise Chronology of Approaches to the Poles, R. K. Headland, DIO Vol. 4 No. 3, <http://www.dioi.org/vols/w43.pdf> , Concise chronology of approach to the Poles, Scott Polar Research Institute, <http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/resources/infosheets/21.html> .

<sup>18</sup> "Transport and snow", Musée J-Armand Bombardier,  
<http://www.fjab.qc.ca/en/content/motoneige/letransportetlaneige.htm> .

On April 6, 1969, Sir Wally Herbert<sup>19</sup> and companions Allan Gill, Roy Koerner and Kenneth Hedges of the British Trans-Arctic Expedition became the first men to reach the North Pole on foot<sup>20</sup>.

On August 17, 1977, the *Soviet nuclear powered icebreaker Arktika*<sup>21</sup> completed the first surface vessel journey to the North Pole.

In recent years, journeys to the North Pole by air -landing at a runway prepared on the ice- or by icebreaker have become relatively routine, and are even available to small groups of tourists through adventure holiday companies.

On August 2, 2007, a Russian expedition made the first ever manned descent to the ocean bottom at the North Pole, to a depth of 4.3 km, as part of a research program in support of Russia's 2001 territorial claim to a large swathe of the Arctic Ocean. The descent took place in two MIR submersibles and was led by Soviet and Russian polar explorer Arthur Chilingarov. In a symbolic act, the Russian flag was placed on the seabed at the exact position of the Pole<sup>22</sup>.

### ***From the Czar to the nuclear icebreakers***<sup>23</sup>

Since 1728 and Czar Peter the Great, the Russians had a close relationship with the Arctic and wanted to show that they have a dominant influence in the region. Expeditions and investigations had been organized with the purpose to find passages to America and Japan, to explore, to ameliorate methods of navigation, to collect geographical material, to map unknown bays, gulfs, capes and islands of Russia's far-northern territories and of the North Pole.

To the better understanding of the North Pole helped Mikhail Lomonosof, an eminent Russian physicist and philosopher, whose name was given to the well-known Lomonosof Ridge<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> See note No. 12.

<sup>20</sup> ...albeit with the aid of dog teams and air drops.

<sup>21</sup> Bukharin Oleg, "Russia's nuclear icebreaker fleet", Routledge, 2006, [http://www.princeton.edu/~globsec/publications/pdf/14\\_1\\_25-31\\_Bukharin.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/~globsec/publications/pdf/14_1_25-31_Bukharin.pdf), Devinder S. Sodhi, "Northern Sea Route", CRREL, special report 95-17, June 1995, [http://www.crrel.usace.army.mil/library/specialreports/SR95\\_17.pdf](http://www.crrel.usace.army.mil/library/specialreports/SR95_17.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.aari.nw.ru/docs/press\\_release/20070709\\_fedorov.html](http://www.aari.nw.ru/docs/press_release/20070709_fedorov.html), Russia plants flag under N. Pole, BBC news, Thursday, 2 August 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6927395.stm>. See also BBC news references at the end.

<sup>23</sup> Submarines Under Ice (1950s-1960s), Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project, [http://www.whoi.edu/beaufortgyre/history/history\\_subs.html](http://www.whoi.edu/beaufortgyre/history/history_subs.html).

Many brave Russian explorers took the chance to navigate across the Arctic Ocean to find passages to the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean and to discover the truth behind the myths that had been covering as thick ice at that time the Arctic.

The large number of expeditions gave the Russians the opportunity to collect experience, in order to elaborate methods of navigation and mapping<sup>25</sup> and to lead better geological and oceanic analysis.

Even settlements were established during the so-called Northern Expeditions (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries). By the first quarter of 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were 12 large Russian settlements in different corners of Alaska, which were administered by the Russian-American Company until Alaska was sold to the USA in 1867.

The advances in shipbuilding resulted to the creation of the icebreaker. This fact led to new expeditions and studies and served military and commercial interests in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Arctic Ocean was more open than ever and the close relationship that had been created for centuries with Russia gave it strong reasons to claim sovereignty over the cold region.

### ***Russia and the North Pole***

i. Russia is the biggest country on Earth stretching from Eastern Europe to the Far East.

It is already well-known that consists the first gas exporter and the second oil exporter of the globe.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid, M. Lomonosov, whose name was given to the Lomonosov Ridge (in fact, it was very common at that time to give to the geographical features the names of the Naval Officers that had led the explorations), participated in the Great Northern expeditions for 20 years. He taught navigators to make physical measurements and he developed specialized ship logs and meteorological log books. He also wrote a description of explorations in the northern seas and included a discussion of Arctic oceanography. Apart from all the above, he was the first to give a scientifically based theory of the aurora (northern lights) and to portray ocean around the North Pole, contrary to generally accepted opinion.

<sup>25</sup>Especially after the Napoleonic Wars, when there was renewed interest for mapping and hundreds of miles of coasts had been mapped then (Siberian Coast, Novaya Zemlya etc.).

We therefore have no reason to wonder why Russia is on a rush to legitimize a sort of control over the ice-encrusted Arctic. The main reason why seems to be Russia's obsession with its energy policy. Since a strong energy policy is believed to be an indispensable political (that is to say diplomatic) card and since the North Pole seems to mean another word for saying a quarter per cent of the world's oil and gas supplies<sup>26</sup>, there are no doubts left.

According to international law and, more specifically, under the current UN Convention on the law of the sea (1982)<sup>27</sup>, the North Pole and the area around it belongs to nobody. That is to say that no country has the right to claim sovereignty over this region. It is considered to be an international area. As a result, it is administered by the International Seabed Authority<sup>28</sup>.

Russia just like the other four countries surrounding the Arctic Circle (which are called circumpolar-the USA, Canada, Norway and Denmark) has to accept the limited 200 nautical mile (370km) economic zone around its coasts for exploitation. The area beyond the economic zone is administered by the International Seabed Authority.

On the other hand, a country has the right, for a ten year period upon having ratified the UN Convention, to make claims with the purpose to extend its economic zone.

With the above clarification, it seems that now things are getting less complicated.

For a long time, scientists and international law experts have been scratching their heads to base via geological and legal facts the Russian territorial claims in the Arctic. And this should happen before the "deadline" was set to expire (while Russia had ratified the UN Convention in 1997, the last chance to raise claims for the extension of its economic zone was before the end of 2007-the ten year period as mentioned above).

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<sup>26</sup>Cohen Ariel, "Russia's Race for the Arctic", published by The Heritage Foundation, August 6 2007, No. 1582, <http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed080807a.cfm>, "Russia plants flag under N. Pole", BBC news, Thursday, 2 August 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6927395.stm> (Competing claims).

<sup>27</sup> See the text of the Treaty on [http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos\\_e.pdf](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf), especially Part II and Part V.

<sup>28</sup> See note No. 26 (BBC news).



Again, under the UN Convention, a country has the right to claim sovereignty over the North Pole only if proves that its continental shelf is directly linked with the Pole's continental shelf. To put it differently, a state needs to prove that the structure of the continental shelf is similar to the geological structure within its territory<sup>29</sup>. Until recently and under the UN Convention, no country has such a prerequisite.

All of a sudden, last year during summer (well, to be honest, the last word does not make any difference to... the North Pole), there was a so called discovery and a massive scientific achievement/RCP. A group of Russian geologists traveled to the Lomonosov Ridge, an underwater shelf in Russia's eastern Arctic Ocean. Equipped with nuclear powered icebreakers and submarines able to subdue to high pressure of the pole's seabed, the scientists came to a conclusion of great importance: the Lomonosov Ridge was linked to Russian Federation's territory<sup>30</sup>.

ii. Not only is the Arctic believed to "be the home" for about 25% of the world's oil and gas supplies, but also the fact that the pole shelf is 200 meters deep facilitates exploitation<sup>31</sup>. What makes oil drilling and gas extraction even more feasible is the climatic change due to global warming.

Ice melting is certainly a nightmare for many countries, many species, many NGOs, but not in the case of Russia. Russia would have no reason not to be satisfied with the fact that Siberia, for example, may get a little more hospitable, warmer. But, apart from the above reason, ice melting may facilitate more the natural resources' exploitation at the pole<sup>32</sup>.

Furthermore, due to ice melting (and the summer retreat of the sea ice), new passages or strategic shipping lanes will be wide open (Northern Sea Route and the Northwest passage) that will facilitate –in terms of time and distance- communication between America, Europe and Asia and will be more trustworthy in comparison to the Suez and the Panama Canal<sup>33</sup>, which are overwhelmed with political instability in the Middle East, congestion and piracy in strategic waterways.

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<sup>29</sup> Harding Luke, "Kremlin lays claim to huge chunk of oil-rich North Pole", *The Guardian*, Thursday June 28 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jun/28/russia.oil> .

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid* and Cohen Ariel, "Russia's Race for the Arctic", published by The Heritage Foundation, August 6 2007, No. 1582, <http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed080807a.cfm> .

<sup>32</sup> Woods hole oceanographic institution, History, "North Pole Drifting Stations (1930's to 1980's)", [http://www.whoi.edu/beaufortgyre/history/history\\_drifting.html](http://www.whoi.edu/beaufortgyre/history/history_drifting.html) .

<sup>33</sup> The opening of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and the Northwest passage has the potential to transform global shipping patterns. The NSR or North east passage is a shipping passage opening

As a result, the Russian Federation by claiming a sector of the North Pole continental shelf the size of France, Germany and Italy together (a vast 460.000 mile chunk<sup>34</sup>) will have the opportunity to secure its long-term eurasian energy-powered foreign policy and why not its hegemony over the global markets.

Russia needed desperately to expand the Federation's maritime borders<sup>35</sup> beyond the agreed 200 mile economic zone. So, in 2001, it decided to make a submission to the UN commission on the limits of the continental shelf (under the Law Of the Sea Treaty to which is a member<sup>36</sup>), with the above purpose. The submission was neither rejected nor accepted. Why? It is easy to guess. If the submission had been definitely accepted, the expansion of the maritime zone would have meant acceptance of russian sovereignty rights over the pole. After this legal move, Russia is planning to resubmit the claim<sup>37</sup> (2007), while urges to have found (more and stable) scientific proofs, such as control over the Lomonosov Ridge and the Mendeleev Ridge.

Nevertheless, these two Ridges, which are two underwater geological structures that jut into the ocean from the Russian continental shelf, do not extend enough to legitimize Moscow's claims. Apart from that, the same claims could be placed by other surrounding the Arctic countries (Canada for example)<sup>38</sup> depending on the same Ridges.

Let's return to August 2007 exploration. The Russian scientists-explorers after having traveled by icebreakers and submersibles and having reached the pole's seabed placed a russian flag under the north pole<sup>39</sup>. This move has definitely no legal effect, but the way it was introduced –as a normal and definitely just sign of conquest and therefore possession- has raised fears for a *de facto* russian control over the disputed area.

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stretching from the North Atlantic, along the Siberian Coast, to the Russian Far East and the Pacific Ocean. See Midkhatovich Yenikheff Shamil and Fenton Krysiak Timothy, "The battle for the Next Energy Frontier", *Oxford Energy Comment*, August 2007, [http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment\\_0807-3.pdf](http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment_0807-3.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> See note No. 31.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*

<sup>36</sup> Cohen Ariel, "Russia's Race for the Arctic", published by The Heritage Foundation, August 6 2007, No. 1582, <http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed080807a.cfm>

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*

iii. There remain though some basic problems for the North Pole's exploitation by Russia (if we finally consider that Russia gains sovereignty over the region), such as the lack of technological know-how and the lack of geological data. These problems are related to the end of exploration expeditions since the collapse of the Soviet Union. So, either Russia will carry the entire burden on its shoulders (which will not be wise in economic terms) or will seek cooperation.

If we accept the last solution, Norway has many possibilities to become a closer strategic partner. The Norwegian firms Statoil and Norsk Hydro possess important technological know-how drilling wells in severe climates and Norway is already a strategic russian partner in Arctic hydrocarbon development (more attractive than the american firms, that face accusations for pollution and more importantly are not widely accepted by the russian public opinion)<sup>40</sup>.

### *The others*

The russian expedition provoked a chain reaction of expeditions for scientific reasons and military maneuvers from the other "opponents" in this "race". All circumpolar states started re-realize the importance of the region.

It is considered to be the perfect moment for the USA to ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty<sup>41</sup>, in order not to go unchallenged the russian views. Apart from that, it would be the perfect opportunity via the Treaty means to settle any disputes-disagreements with Russia.

It is also a good time for closer cooperation to be created amongst the "western" countries on the issue, in order to derail the fervent for dominance of the russian polar bear.

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<sup>40</sup>Midkhatovich Yenikeeff Shamil and Fenton Krysiak Timothy, "The battle for the Next Energy Frontier", Oxford Energy Comment, August 2007, [http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment\\_0807-3.pdf](http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment_0807-3.pdf).

<sup>41</sup>The USA refused to ratify the Treaty claiming that it gives too much power to the UN. It is worth saying that the Sea Treaty is the world's primary means of settling disputes over exploitation rights, navigation and international waters; a number of 153 states has ratified it including Russia (Harding Luke, "Kremlin lays claim to huge chunk of oil-rich North Pole", The Guardian, Thursday June 28 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jun/28/russia.oil>). It would be the right time for the USA by ratifying the Treaty to claim sovereignty over 600 miles of seabed off the Alaskan coast (Midkhatovich Yenikeeff Shamil and Fenton Krysiak Timothy, "The battle for the Next Energy Frontier", Oxford Energy Comment, August 2007, [http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment\\_0807-3.pdf](http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment_0807-3.pdf)).

As a response to the Russian behavior (claims and the flag), Denmark and Norway<sup>42</sup> filed their own claims, in opposition to the Russian ones, to the UN Commission on the limits of the continental shelf.

Denmark wanted to scientifically prove that the Lomonosov Ridge is an underwater extension of Greenland and not of Russia. In order to do so, launched its own expedition<sup>43</sup>.

Canada and the USA expressed their skepticism on the same matter and confirmed that this act (the flag) is of no legal effect.

The USA dismissed its own expedition on 6 August, in order to study global warming (and show Russia that it is not alone in the region) and its counter-effects. To their disappointment, the US Coast Guard realized that there was only one icebreaker capable of completing the mission, the icebreaker Healy. Well, this expedition instead of showing the US power, showed its weakness, the critical condition of the US icebreaking fleet<sup>44</sup>. The good news seem to be that after the expedition, many representatives and senators may support the Law of the Sea Treaty and legislation for the amelioration of the icebreaking fleet.

Canada stressed the need to use military power to enhance and protect its longstanding sovereignty over the Arctic Circle. The government, right after the Russian expedition, launched its own expedition called “operation Nanook” in the Canadian Arctic on 7 August<sup>45</sup>. Canada needs to hurry up, in order to submit to the UN commission scientifically based proof for sovereignty claims. The period after ratification expires in 2012. The critical conditions of its icebreakers may lead it to cooperation with other countries, in order to gain exploitation rights in the icy northern waters.

The best deal would be a common exploitation project of the Arctic’s wealth by all five countries.

The USA, Canada and the Nordic countries called for closer cooperation, in order to build a stable North-Western presence and

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<sup>42</sup> Norway for the above mentioned reasons is more reluctant and “cool”.

<sup>43</sup> It may also respond to Canadian military maneuvers with its own show of force. The two states have a prehistory of sovereignty race on Hans Island (Midkhatovich Yenikeeff Shamil and Fenton Krysiak Timothy, “The battle for the Next Energy Frontier”, *Oxford Energy Comment*, August 2007, [http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment\\_0807-3.pdf](http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment_0807-3.pdf)).

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*

strategy (high North strategy) in the region and invited other friendly states to follow them (Great Britain)<sup>46</sup>.

This “presence” may include more scientific expeditions, new and more ice breakers, geological studies and military presence.

### *The future*

The Russian Federation -that is to say the Russian politicians- is totally unpredictable. The lack of means of surveillance over the application of the Law of the Sea Treaty makes the Treaty vulnerable to infringements. The above statements mixed up may lead us divine that Moscow has prepared a project for a *de facto* control over the North Pole, in order to exploit the rich natural resources of the disputed, but however international, area. At the same time, diplomatic games with little significance, via legal terms, will be played. Moscow will try to show to the international community that still intends to play by the (international) rules by providing proofs that can justify its claims of sovereignty over the region. Apart from that, it will try to create an international custom/rule of presence in the region using the same proofs. But no international custom can be accepted if based on illegal facts or international law infringements. But, if pushed too much by a “western” international law, will not hesitate to disobey.

As far as it concerns the other countries involved in the North Pole dispute, they have shown that they follow Russia’s steps. They (Norway and Denmark) have filed claims not for the sake of the North Pole and the preservation of its internationality, but for the sake of their interests. And I think that when Russia starts to exploit the North Pole, they will unfortunately do the same. As a justification for their act, they will state that they do this in response to Russia’s behavior (we do it, because they do the same).

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<sup>46</sup> Cohen Ariel, “Russia’s Race for the Arctic”, published by The Heritage Foundation, August 6 2007, No. 1582, <http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed080807a.cfm>

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## *Photoalbum*



A Russian miniature submarine is lowered into water from the research vessel Akademik Fyodorov to perform test dives somewhere in the undisclosed location in the Arctic Ocean in this image made from television... (Associated Press) in newser ([http://www.newser.com/story/4925.html?refid=YTF\\_S](http://www.newser.com/story/4925.html?refid=YTF_S)).

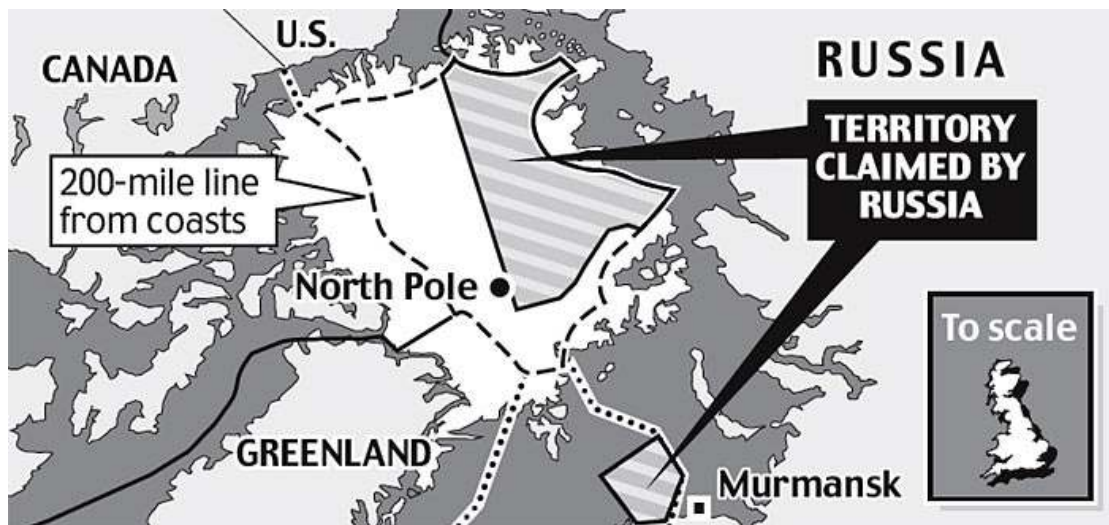


The U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker Healy is shown leaving Seattle Monday, Aug. 6, 2007, for a scientific mission in the Arctic that will include breaking ice well north of Barrow, Alaska. The seven-year-old... (Associated Press) in newser (<http://www.newser.com/story/5800.html>).





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Putin claims that an underwater Russian ridge is linked to the North Pole, from Daily Mail ([http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/worldnews.html?in\\_article\\_id=464921&in\\_page\\_id=1811](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/worldnews.html?in_article_id=464921&in_page_id=1811)).



- 1) **North Pole:** Russia leaves its flag on the seabed, 4,000m (13,100ft) beneath the surface, as part of its claims for oil and gas reserves
- 2) **Lomonosov Ridge:** Russia argues that this underwater feature is an extension of its continental territory and is looking for evidence
- 3) **200-nautical mile (370km) line:** Shows how far countries' agreed economic area extends beyond their coastline. Often set from outlying islands

**4) Russian-claimed territory:** The bid to claim a vast area is being closely watched by other countries. Some could follow suit  
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