

Situation

Greenland, positioned strategically in the Arctic Circle, acts as a critical geopolitical nexus due to its proximity to North America, Europe, and Asia. The ongoing effects of global warming have not only made Greenland more habitable but have also exposed valuable natural resources and opened new maritime routes like the Northern Sea Route (NSR). This route promises a shorter path for commercial shipping, enhancing economic efficiencies and strategic mobility.

Complication

The melting Arctic ice has not only unlocked new opportunities for resource extraction and economic activities but has also intensified international competition over Greenland. The region's strategic importance has drawn increasing military and economic interest from major global powers, leading to an international competition. The United States, Russia, and China, in particular, have shown renewed interest in establishing a stronger presence in the area to secure these newly accessible routes and resources. Greenland holds an estimated 30% of the world's undiscovered natural gas and 13% of the world's undiscovered oil, further fuelling this competition (William Tan, 29 August 2024, *The Coldest Geopolitical Hotspot: Global Powers Vie for Arctic Dominance over Greenland*). Additionally, the Northern Sea Route (NSR) reduces travel time between Europe and Asia to just 10-15 days, compared to 20-30 days via the Panama Canal, making it a highly attractive commercial corridor (*Artic Review*, 2024). Geopolitical tensions are worsened by the current global political climate, including recent conflicts.

Question

- How can international interests over the Arctic Circle be balanced to ensure sustainable resource management while preventing geopolitical tensions?

Stakeholders

- **Local Government and People of Greenland:** Primarily concerned with political autonomy, environmental sustainability, and economic benefits without compromising their sovereignty.
- **United States:** Interested in maintaining and expanding its geopolitical influence in the Arctic, securing energy resources, and monitoring strategic rivals.
- **China and Russia:** Both seeking to expand their global influence through economic, technological, and military investments in the Arctic, including the development of new shipping routes and resource extraction.
- **Scandinavian Countries and the European Union:** With historical and regional ties to Greenland, these countries are key players in the security and environmental management of the Arctic.
- **Environmental NGOs and International Regulatory Bodies:** These organizations are crucial in advocating for sustainable practices and the protection of the Arctic environment against the impacts of global warming and human activities.