

Conceptualizing the Arctic; A Zone of Peace or a Zone of Conflict?

Online conference
22 November 2022, 1-3 pm CET



Conference Synopsis

The melting of the Arctic Ocean has catapulted the Arctic region onto the international stage. With over 40% of the Ocean's hard multi-year ice vanishing over the past decades, and the region warming at twice the global rate, access to its fisheries, mineral resources and new shipping lanes, no longer seems like a distant reality. Competition for the Arctic is now in full swing, putting the spotlight on its governance arrangements.

Eight Arctic littoral states make up the Arctic Council, a loose forum for dialogue amongst the main Arctic powers. The Arctic's nearly 1.5 million indigenous people are given a voice within the Council, and countries such as China, India, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea have all been granted observer status. The United Nations Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) governs the Arctic Ocean.

Current global tensions have spilled over into the Arctic, with former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declaring in 2019 that while Arctic Council has had the luxury of focusing on scientific cooperation since its creation, it now has to turn to 'strategic interests' and a new 'era of competition for Arctic resources'. This year, the work of the Arctic Council which was supposed to be chaired by Russia, was suspended by seven of the Arctic nations objecting to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

So what does the future look like for the Arctic region, and will it be a zone of peace or zone of conflict? Are current governance arrangements fit for purpose, and what of the growing



militarization of the Arctic that is pitting NATO against non-NATO states? These are but some of the questions that this conference will explore.

Speakers:

Timo Juhani Soini, former Deputy Prime Minister and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland

« *The Arctic, a Zone of Peace or of Conflict ?* »

Mads Qvist Frederiksen, Executive Director, Arctic Economic Council

« *The Future of Economic Cooperation in the Arctic* »

Abbie Tingstad, Associate Director, Management, Technology and Capabilities Program, RAND Homeland Security Research Division

« *The Militarization of the Arctic & NATO Expansion* »

Timo Koivurova, Research Professor at the Arctic Center, University of Lapland

« *Russia and the Suspension of the Arctic Council* »

Lisa Koperqualuk, President, Inuit Circumpolar Conference - Canada

« *Do Indigenous People have a Voice in the Arctic ?* »

Moderator:

Doaa Abdel-Motaal, Author of *Antarctica; the Battle for the Seventh Continent*, contributing author to *Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic*, and Visiting Professor at The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies