



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Arctic Geopolitics and the Possible Impact on Pakistan's Foreign Policy**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Purpose of this study consists of three dynamic perspectives. The first one is to understand Climate change and its impacts on global community. The Second is to grasp the geopolitical variable of sea born trade shifts from Indian Ocean to Arctic Ocean and North Sea. Finally, the vast energy resources in the bottom of the Arctic as well as open up the northern trade route. The Arctic Ocean route has also provided more options for, those, nations dependent on energy imports and trade, for their economic growth. The resultant competition for viability between the North Sea and Indian Ocean trade routes shall force all the energy dependent nations to change their foreign policy decisions and shift towards Northern routes for trade. The methodology adopted for this study is based on qualitative research model. The research recommended that Pakistan, too, must turn its gaze more to the North, towards Central Asia and then towards Russia.

**KEYWORDS** Arctic Geopolitics, Foreign Policy, Pakistan, Russian Northern Sea Routes

**Introduction**

There is no dearth of literature about the harmful impacts of climate change for all life on Earth. Devastating weather events, rising sea levels, wildfires, and hotter temperatures have manifested time and again as the consequences of humanity's reckless pursuit of sustenance at the expense of nature. There is another factor that is part and parcel of human actions driving climate change: Geopolitics. Great-power competition has led to the race for obtaining fossil-fuel energy resources with no regard for natural habitats or the environment one breathes in. In the case of the Arctic Ocean, however, there is a flipping of the script manifesting itself: it is climate change that shall drive geopolitics, not the other way around.

The Arctic Ocean is the smallest ocean in the world, being only 14 million square kilometers in area according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. However, what it lacks in size, it makes up for in geographical importance. It is straddled by Russia, the United States, Norway, Denmark (via Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Canada, Sweden, and Iceland. These nations have their own Exclusive Economic Zones in the area that often overlap with one another, causing maritime border disputes. In addition to the presence of major powers, the ocean also has a potential major trade route, the Northern Sea Route, and about thirty percent of the world's undiscovered oil-and-gas resources as per a 2009 US Geological Survey report. Hence, countries that need those resources for their economic growth might have another source where to find them as the Arctic ice melts (Center, 2009).

The real meat of the matter, though, is the aforementioned Northern Sea route (NSR). It starts at Vladivostok in eastern Russia and goes around Russia's northern coastline to reach the port of Murmansk near the Finnish border. It is almost 13,000 kilometers long, and would reduce travel time for Asia-Europe maritime trade to 19 days rather than the current 48 days it takes via the Suez Canal, if developed fully. It passes through the Russian EEZ, so the country could earn handsome amount of tax revenues to promote its economic growth as well as have greater influence over global trade. This notion, coupled with China's

rise as an economic power and its quest to reduce its vulnerability to maritime chokepoints in order to secure energy supplies, has led to increased cooperation between Russia and China in recent years. All this has certainly raised eyebrows in the West, which has increasingly been at odds with the two countries for global influence.

It is predicted that the rapid melting of the ice in the Arctic will lead to the more frequent availability of the NSR for maritime trade throughout the year. Inevitably, this will cause a sort of strategic competition of significance and efficacy between the NSR and the Indian Ocean. The West would prefer promoting the latter, and the Russians and Chinese the Arctic. This development necessitates certain augmentations in the foreign policies of various nations, especially those nearer to Russia and China. Pakistan is one of those nations.

Currently dependent on the West and the Middle East for much of its exports and imports, the opening up of the Arctic offers Pakistan a second option for expanding its trade and obtaining more energy resources to fulfill the needs of a burgeoning population. Through proactive diplomacy, infrastructure investments, road networks and energy pipelines through Central Asia and then on to Russia, Pakistan can fulfill its energy needs, gain a shorter route to export its goods to the West through Russian ports, and thus get on the path to sustainable economic growth to secure its future. Even though the full-time availability of the Arctic for trade and energy supplies is still about 10-20 years off, the coming opportunities afforded to Pakistan by this development make it incumbent upon foreign policymakers to commence planning for it now. Geopolitics necessitates long-term planning, and the latter is necessary for Pakistan (Muzaffar, et. al., 2016; Chaturvedi, 2000).

## **Literature Review**

The major portion of the literature reviewed for this study is generated by international surveys and reports compiled by United States geological institutions and UK based environmental organizations. Some of the proceedings of UK's parliamentary debates and reports are also considered for investigative purposes. However, the other sources include the publications of international think tanks and newspapers articles. To comprehend the concepts related to international sea routes the international law of seas 1982 has been observed in great detail.

British author Peter Frankopan elaborates in his recent work *The Earth Transformed*, it is impossible for one corner of the world not to be affected by climate change in the other, and over the following decades, global concern about climate change in the Arctic will mount, putting pressure on the Arctic powers to restrain their resource exploitation (Frankopan, 2023). The United Nations convention on law of seas concluded in 1982 explained that the Exclusive Economic Zone, a coastal state has the sovereign right to explore the natural resources, conduct marine scientific research, establish artificial structures, and take measures for preserving and protecting the marine environment (Nations, United Nations Organization Conventions\_agreement Article 56, 1982). So the Arctic nations would have the legal authority over the natural resources of arctic ocean. the United States Geological Survey assessed in 2009 the area north of the Arctic Circle and concluded that about 30% of the world's undiscovered oil may be found there, mostly offshore under less than 500 meters of water. Undiscovered natural gas is three times more abundant than oil in the Arctic and is largely concentrated in Russia. In addition, The Arctic has deposits of nickel, copper, coal, gold, uranium, tungsten and diamonds (Analytica, 2018). The world's trade and energy supplies, for the most part, pass through the Suez Canal (SC) route that is about 21,000 km long from Europe to Asia. Maritime shipping takes about one month to ply this route. As for the NSR, the distance and the shipping time are reduced to 13,000 km and less than two weeks respectively (Voices, 2023).

## **Material and Methods**

A number of data collection approaches have been adopted in this research work. Primarily the deductive model of analysis is applied to generate arguments from descriptive research. In this research paper qualitative method of research is used. Qualitative research methodology includes data collection from Surveys, International reports and publications, research articles, electronic sources that include news websites and think-tank analysis and commentaries of experts, interviews, explanations, opinions and explanation from persons of various schools of thoughts. This is a firsthand work based on researcher’s qualitative insight and analysis.

**Results and Discussion**

**Dynamics of Arctic Geopolitics**

Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov, also known as Lenin, once said (This is often attributed to Lenin, but some historians believe it to be apocryphal):

*“There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen.”*

If one were to modify this and apply it to the Arctic Ocean, one would say,

*“There are millions of years when nothing happens, and there are decades when millions of years happen.”*

Being frozen solid for most of human history, not much attention has been paid to the Arctic ocean in any respect. It has been impossible to have navigation of any sort through this area beyond a few days annually, if at all. In recent times, however, this is undergoing a sea-change (pun intended). Climate change is gradually instigating the melting of ice in the Arctic Ocean, opening up new trade routes and natural resources previously impassable for millennia upon millennia. It is not much of a stretch to imagine that unprecedented new avenues of competition between major powers will open up in future, upending the dynamics of global security and trade. Previously dormant matters of international law are also expected to play into these dynamics.

First and foremost, it is necessary to define where the Arctic region lies.

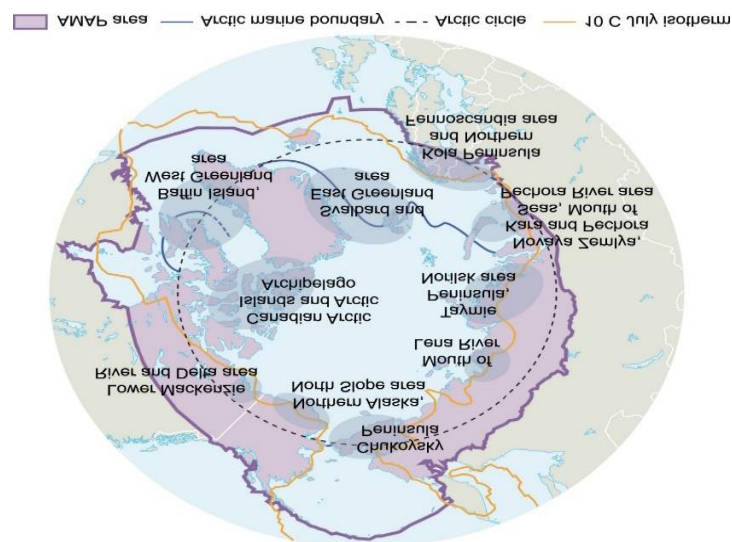


Figure 1: The Arctic Region Source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666498423000674>

There are various ways to define the Arctic region. The most common definition is the area within the Arctic Circle, which can be defined as the southernmost latitude in the Northern Hemisphere at which the center of the sun can remain continuously above or below the horizon for 24 hours; this imaginary line circles the globe at approximately 66° 34' N. According to the political definition, the Arctic includes the northernmost territories of the 8 Arctic states, the members of the Arctic Council: Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States (Klimenko, 2019). As is clear from the map and the above definition, all have their Arctic coastlines close to one another, and therein lies the rub regarding legal matters that has heretofore been a peripheral concern.

**Maritime Boundary Affairs**

Part V of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) deals with Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), which are defined as an area beyond the territorial sea (Nations, 1982) that

*“shall not extend beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.”* (Nations, 1982)

In the EEZ, a coastal state has the sovereign right to explore the natural resources, conduct marine scientific research, establish artificial structures, and take measures for preserving and protecting the marine environment (Nations, United Nations Organization Coventions agreement Article 56, 1982) As per UNCLOS, the EEZs of the Arctic nations would, on paper, look like this.

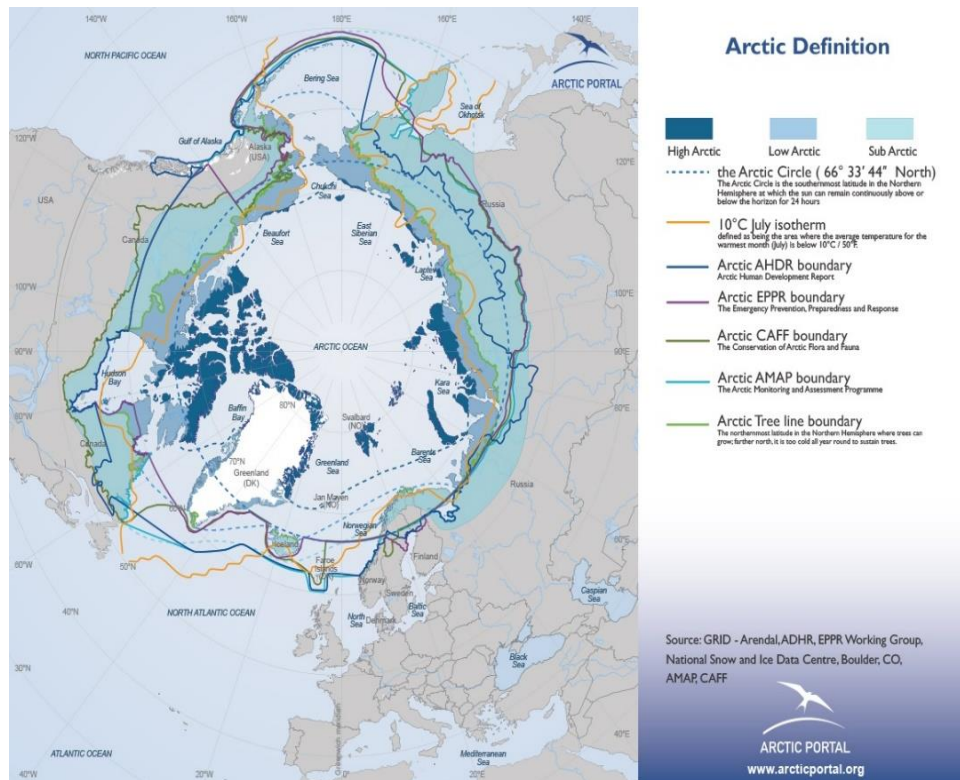


Figure 2: Arctic Region EEZs Source: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmenvaud/1141/report.html>

The concept of the EEZ overlaps with that of the continental shelf, however, which is defined (Nations, United Nations Organization, 1982) as

*“The continental shelf of a coastal State comprises the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin, or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured where the outer edge of the continental margin does not extend up to that distance.”*

According to other articles related to the EEZ in UNCLOS, a country may extend its EEZ beyond the stipulated 200 nautical miles if it can prove conclusively that its continental landmass extends beyond the length set down by UNCLOS. This is the provision of the Law of the Sea that is the main legal issue in the Arctic.

All countries in the region have laid claims to EEZs beyond 200 nautical miles – none more so than the United States (US) and the Russian Federation. Russia in particular, has claimed a substantial portion of the Arctic Ocean right up to the Lomonosov Ridge near the North Pole, even planting a flag there in 2007 to assert its claims (Kramer, 2007). It claims that its Siberian continental plate extends to the North Pole, and so it has the right to exclusively explore its resources for Russia’s own economic benefit. All other Arctic nations, led by the US, vehemently dispute Russia’s claims, and especially after Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, there remains an impasse as to how to resolve the matter. The US also recently extended its own Arctic EEZ via the state of Alaska (Denning, 2024), but its right to do this is questionable since it is not a signatory to UNCLOS. Customary international law can be claimed to apply here, but legal disputes in the complex world of today can be better resolved via conventions than mere psychological understanding of what the law is and how it ought to be followed.

This is a pertinent example of international law having an impact on geopolitics. In the past it was said that he who conquered Constantinople would have the world. In the near future it may happen that the nation in control of the Arctic would reap unimaginable economic and strategic benefits by having the exclusive right to its natural resources, and thus ‘have the world.’ International law, as always, is being weaponized by major powers to deny the others benefits of exploiting the resources present in an area. It is a vicious cycle of climate change making more energy resources available, and the exploitation of those resources via ‘law fare’ begetting more climate change (Derepentigny, 2020). As British author Peter Frankopan elaborates in his recent work *The Earth Transformed*, it is impossible for one corner of the world not to be affected by climate change in the other, and over the following decades, global concern about climate change in the Arctic will mount, putting pressure on the Arctic powers to restrain their resource exploitation (Frankopan, 2023).

### **Climate Change and Natural Resources**

For millions of years, the Arctic was completely closed off to any attempts at navigation or exploration of natural resources. In recent times, however, climate change has provided mankind to do both of these things. The Arctic has become a symbol of the long-term effects of climate change, a sort of poster boy. Gradually, the ice has receded, making the Arctic sea available for navigation for more days annually. The Arctic could see summer days with practically no sea ice as early as the next couple of years, according to a new study out of the University of Colorado Boulder (Barkham, 2017). For those nations, especially major powers, coveting natural resources for energy needs and economic benefits, this is good news, and they already foresee this fact and are working towards taking advantage of it. This is seen in the aforementioned weaponization of international law, wherein countries in the Arctic are seeking to expand their respective EEZs in a thinly veiled attempt to acquire more of the available resources for their own strategic advantage.

And resources there are aplenty in the Arctic: the United States Geological Survey assessed in 2009 the area north of the Arctic Circle and concluded that about 30% of the



world's undiscovered gas and 13% of the world's undiscovered oil may be found there, mostly offshore under less than 500 meters of water. Undiscovered natural gas is three times more abundant than oil in the Arctic and is largely concentrated in Russia. In addition, The Arctic has deposits of nickel, copper, coal, gold, uranium, tungsten and diamonds (Analytica, 2018). As the Arctic ice retreats due to climate change, these resources will become more accessible, and so will increase the attention major powers like China, Russia, and the US pay to the Arctic region in their respective foreign policies, shifting focus somewhat away from the Middle Eastern energy resources and trade routes.

### The Arctic Trade Routes

There are three main maritime trade routes running through the Arctic region: the Northwest Passage, the Northern Sea Route (NSR), and the Transpolar Route. All three are shown below.



Figure No. 3 Arctic Trade Route  
Source: <https://dailybrief.oxan.com/Analysis/DB238508/Polar-Silk-Road-will-reshape-trade-and-geopolitics>

The transpolar route is not as much the center of attention, due to the Arctic sea ice, as are the other two which are less hampered by the ice. Both these passages have been the object of naval nostalgia due to the difficulties of passing them. In recent times, they both are becoming better at being accessible, the NSR more so.

One look at the map and it becomes abundantly clear why the NSR is the object of interest of both the Western Arctic powers and the Russo-Chinese strategic axis. The recession of the Arctic ice is to a greater extent from the Russian coastline than the other route. Hence, the NSR will become more available for maritime shipping much earlier, perhaps as soon as this decade.

The world's trade and energy supplies, for the most part, pass through the Suez Canal (SC) route that is about 21,000 km long from Europe to Asia. Maritime shipping takes about one month to ply this route. As for the NSR, the distance and the shipping time are reduced to 13,000 km and less than two weeks respectively (Voices, 2023). Given the recurrent bottlenecks that occur along the Suez, particularly the Straits of Malacca and Bab

al-Mandab, substantial savings in maritime shipping costs are possible. Though the ice-free status of the Arctic is still some time into the future, several Arctic nations, especially Russia and its ally China, are already acutely aware of the possibilities the NSR offers as a viable trade route not much vulnerable to interdiction by their geopolitical rivals, the US and its allies.



Figure 3: NSR (Red) v Suez Route (Blue)

In the future, then, countries trading between Europe and Asia might not be completely dependent on the Suez route, but have another viable option. It will not be easy due to the presence of ice, and substantial investments may have to be made in ice-breaker technology along with orienting geopolitical calculus in favor of Russia, but for the purpose of securing economic growth and a stable picture of trade, sooner or later many countries may have to look towards the NSR for maritime trade.

### **Strategic Interests of Arctic Powers**

To define the strategic contours of Arctic geopolitics, it is quite sufficient to confine the analysis to four stakeholders: the US, Russia, China, and NATO as a whole.

Ever since Communism made its presence felt on the world stage in the early- and mid- twentieth century, the US has been the geopolitical rival of both China and Russia. Though ebbs and flows in their relations have continued over the decades, a general wish to avoid escalation has been understood in all three capitals. The avenues of cold conflict have been geopolitical, cultural, economic, and technological. The Arctic may be about to be added to the list as an area of significant interest to both axes. With Russia expanding its military footprint in the region, and China also taking a keen interest due to the new trade routes and energy supplies, the US is concerned that the Russo-Chinese alliance will be in control of much of the world's maritime trade and thus will erode the influence of the unipolar world order that has already been in decline due to China's rise and Russia's resurgence. The recent US expansion of its EEZ claims in the Arctic via Alaska is a step taken in response to this possibility. However, unless the US goes on to ratify the UNCLOS, it could be unable to press its claims against Russo-Chinese assertiveness in the region. A greater danger for the US in this respect is the potential loss of support for it in Europe. If European nations feel, even in the short term, that the NSR is the more cost-effective route than the US Navy-protected Indian Ocean and Suez Canal (IOSC) one, they could pivot towards better relations with Russia in economic and political terms, which would be detrimental to US interests globally. Hence, the US wants to expand its footprint in the region partly to reassure its European allies.

Another factor in the US interests in the Arctic is the availability of new energy resources. The climate change pledges made by various Arctic nations, the US chief among them, are more pipe-dreams than actual intent of action. US energy companies, such as Exxon Mobil, will be very interested in the exploration of oil and natural gas in the region in order to earn windfall profits, as they have done so in the Middle East. In such a scenario, countries like the US may water down their respective climate pledges in order to take advantage of the newly available resources, and deny the initiative to their rivals (Frankopan, 2023). Although this will be a setback for global climate action, one has to ask: when have the world's major powers ever let such concerns stand in the way of geopolitical gain?

Intertwined with US interests in the Arctic is the strategic calculus of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Arctic is, perhaps, NATO's 'soft upper belly,' in that the latter's strategic rival Russia is militarily preponderant and is in a position for primacy in a region where NATO lacks much of a foothold. This is so even though seven out of the eight Arctic nations are members of the organization. However, as climate change has become the chief concern of many parts of the world, its direct impact on the Arctic, resulting in renewed interest in its energy resources and maritime territorial claims. This is where the accession to NATO of Finland and Sweden comes in. Long tomes can be composed about how the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine induced the two new NATO members to abandon their longstanding neutrality. One has to ask though: Tougher crises than the one in Ukraine have arisen in the last two centuries. Examples include the Napoleonic Wars, the two World Wars, Cold War in Europe etc. Why did Finland and Sweden not abandon their neutral stance in any of them? It is to be believed that both nations may have other reasons to take this historic step only now, but the timing of it makes one believe that NATO and the US are playing the long game in the Arctic, that Finland and Sweden being in NATO is meant to give the alliance more pairs of hands in the Arctic for what is probably a Great Game-style strategic competition brewing in the region in coming decades.

Russian foreign policy since the end of the Cold War has been based on the Primakov Doctrine, wherein the aim of the Russian state is to oppose diplomatically and economically the unipolar hegemony of the US wherever the latter rears its head as it is a threat to Russian national interests. Russia has also hunted for warm-water ports for trade ever since the time of Tsar Peter the Great (Muzaffar, & Khan, 2016). Its Far-Eastern ports, especially its naval base at Vladivostok, remain frozen for most of the year. Baltic ports, like the one at St. Petersburg, undergo the same problem. Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO makes the Baltic effectively a 'NATO Lake.' Russia has a base at Sevastopol in the Crimean Peninsula, but its use remains restricted due to tensions with Ukraine and the periodic reports of the latter's drone strikes. Hence, the only option Russia has is to look north. Although it can take a few decades, climate change will definitely open up maritime routes in the Arctic and provide Russia with multitudes of potential warm-water ports for trade along almost the entire length of the Arctic. These two factors form the basis of Russian Arctic policy.

It is plausible that Russia perceives recent Finnish and Swedish actions as attempts by the Western bloc to box it in and prevent it from taking advantage of the opportunities offered to it by the Arctic melt. Full development of the NSR would allow Russia the chance to become an economic superpower via infrastructure investments and maritime transit fees. The oil and gas resources along the Russian Arctic coastline can be explored and sold by the Russians to increase their government revenues manifold. The availability of port infrastructure nearby would result in less shipping costs in supplying the resources to Europe, perhaps giving Russia more of a say in European economic and foreign policies. Should these advantages accrue to the Russians without a hitch, the global hegemony of the US would be threatened, in line with the Primakov Doctrine. The buildup of Russian military infrastructure in the Arctic region, coupled with its claims to the Arctic continental shelf, has this purpose in mind. Russia's research into icebreaker ships to be used in the Arctic puts it at an advantage over the other Arctic powers. This is because Russia can then more easily



navigate the Arctic for trade and other purposes whether or not the route is iced over, increasing the attractiveness of the NSR for European and Asian markets for trade, significantly raising Russia's strategic position. Russia, perhaps, didn't overreact to Finnish and Swedish accession to NATO precisely because it realized the real game being played, and is now thinking ahead towards strategically combating the alliance in the Arctic instead.

China has been eagerly watching these developments in the Arctic region because it desires to reduce its maritime trade vulnerabilities in the Indo-Pacific region. The latter is full of chokepoints such as the Straits of Malacca, Hormuz, Bab al-Mandeb etc. These can be blocked by China's strategic rivals, especially the United States, in times of war. This would hamper China's energy supplies as well as its trade, crippling its economy within months. On the other hand, reorienting its trade with Europe and obtaining its energy supplies via the NSR can reduce maritime shipping costs, give China more proximate energy supplies via pipelines to Russian port infrastructure, and reduce the danger of US maritime blackmail. Precisely due to this calculation, in recent years China has taken a keen interest in developments in the Arctic, proclaiming itself as a 'near-Arctic state'. It has aimed at strengthening its strategic partnership with Russia, making the relationship a 'no-limits' one in order to create a united front against US encroachment on their shared interests in the north. China plans on supporting Russia financially and technologically in developing the latter's port facilities and constructing energy pipelines to boost both its own trade as well as Russia's with other parts of the world. The dragon and the bear used to try to tear each other apart for centuries, but now that a common rival in the form of the bald eagle confronts them, the bear is planning to fly on the dragon's wings and the dragon will enlarge its own claws inspired by the bear to restore the balance of power in the world.

### **Possible Impact on Pakistan's Foreign Policy**

**Climate Change Leadership:** The world is like a body. If one part's functionality doesn't remain above water, sooner or later the others will take a hit as well. Same goes for the impact of climate change on the planet. The melting of the ice in the Arctic will cause a collective rise in sea levels all over the world, posing a threat not only to indigenous communities but also to many coastal nations like Bangladesh and the Maldives which are already concerned about the danger to come. Pakistan, too, is among the most vulnerable nations to climate change, and the developments in the Arctic provide an opportunity for the country to rally the climate-affected nations. The Global North could then be put on notice that harm to the very survival of the South cannot be tolerated for the sake of the former's strategic games and energy supplies. Pakistan requires deft diplomacy to help the Global South close ranks against geopolitics that will impact them negatively. The climate-affected countries should be led by a climate-vulnerable nation like Pakistan to form a UN-like assembly for better coordination, and the plausible exacerbation of the climate crisis by developments in the Arctic will provide a good impetus for that institution to be formed.

**New Energy Resources:** The coming developments in the Arctic region call for Pakistan to turn its gaze for energy resources northwards in addition to the Middle East and Southeast Asia. It can and should collaborate on building pipelines reaching Russian Arctic ports in order to obtain vital energy resources like rare oil and gas from the region. Such pipelines will require iron commitments from Pakistan over decades financially and diplomatically. Pakistan's economic straitjacket might make this sound like a pipedream, but many good things throughout history rose out of adverse circumstances like these, and Pakistan's determination to pursue this course despite the diplomatic pressure to be brought to bear upon it by the United States would result in diversified energy supplies to secure Pakistan's economic growth. Maritime shipping costs could be reduced to zero for both Pakistan and Russia as only the investments in pipeline infrastructure and transportation of energy would be required. Pakistan's population is rising, along with its energy needs. Investments in renewable resources are being made, but for decades Pakistan cannot realistically shift completely away from fossil fuels. In such a scenario, dependence

on Middle Eastern energy supplies limits the options in Pakistan's foreign policy, necessitating at least the consideration of the aforementioned proposal.

**New Trade Route:** Developments in the Arctic offer Pakistan an opportunity to strengthen regional connectivity by seeking a new trade route northward to European markets via Russian Arctic ports. As mentioned previously, shipping costs between Europe and Asia can be reduced substantially by using Arctic trade routes. For Pakistan, this cost can be decreased by developing road infrastructure through Central Asian and Russian territory right up to the Arctic ports. Pakistan's economic conditions restrict its financing ability for the project, but perhaps an arrangement on the lines of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) can be sought with Russia in order to reduce the financing need from Pakistan's side. The advantage here would accrue in terms of less trade bottlenecks for faster transport. The revenue thus freed up can be utilized in investing in transport and rail infrastructure by Pakistan not only for this route, but for others as well. Pakistan has the route through Iran and Turkey as well as the one through the Suez Canal, but in modern geopolitics, it doesn't hurt to have a variety of options for trade routes at hand in order to protect oneself politically and economically. This is a world of cross-cutting regional trade routes, and Pakistan's trade with Europe being vital to its financial viability, the proposed trade route would enhance its geopolitical and geo-economic options in world politics.

### **Conclusion**

It can be deduced that Climate change is causing the rapid melting of ice in the Arctic Ocean, with the next 10-15 years predicted to melt the ice completely. This will make available the vast energy resources in the bottom of the Arctic as well as open up the northern trade route. It will also provide more options for those nations dependent on energy imports and trade for their economic growth. The resultant competition for viability between the North Sea and Indian Ocean trade routes makes it incumbent upon many nations to adjust their foreign policy accordingly. Pakistan, too, must turn its gaze more to the North, towards Central Asia and then towards Russia as the latter is the major power most in position to take advantage of the coming dynamics in the Arctic. In geopolitics, it is prudent, justice even, for a nation to keep abreast with not only latest, but also future trends in order to protect its interests.

### **Recommendations**

It is evident from this study that the dynamism, in geopolitics, advancement in artificial intelligence, development in sealines of communication and shift in sea born trade routes, will shift existing trade routes from Indo-pacific to Arctic Ocean. Therefore, Pakistan's foreign policy decision making elite should consider the importance of Climate change, new energy resources and new trade routes in Arctic Ocean as the policy alternative for approaching geopolitical decisions.

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