

Conflict Update # 310

December 30th, 2022

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Conflict Assessment

Russian losses – 105,250 (690) soldiers killed, 3,026 (+8) enemy tanks, 6,059 (+12) armored combat vehicles, 2,010 (+6) artillery systems, 423 (+5) MLRS systems, 212 (+0) air defense systems, 283 (+0) warplanes, 268 (+0) helicopters, 1,740 (+23) UAVs of the operational-tactical level, 711 (+58) cruise missiles, 16 (+0) warships/cutters, 4,683 (+8) trucks and tankers, 4 Iskander Missile Launchers (+0), 239 fuel bowsers (+0) and 180 (+1) units of equipment.

Key Takeaways



“Stop shooting – Its me” – Ukrainian strikes deep into Russian territory have struck panic and paranoia in Russian defenses, reactions and thinking.

Having struck Engels, the primary strategic nuclear airbase some 600 kilometers inside Russia from they have been launching aircraft to fire missiles at Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, has wrought havoc in Russian defense circles with anti-missile and anti-aircraft batteries on heightened alert and trigger-happy.

Yesterday Russian defense stations tracked the flight path of an aircraft or flying object close to the airbase, and shot it down - but it was one of their own planes. The pilot was killed.

In Crimea defense stations tracked drones over the peninsula, and shot down a number of them. These were their own drones directed at Ukrainian targets.

In Belarus a S300 missile was shot down with Lukashenko claiming it was a Ukrainian attack. It is now believed that Belarusian defense crews shot it down.

All S300 and S400 anti-aircraft batteries are centrally controlled with automated fire by Russian control, even those in Belarus.

The Ukrainian attacks inside Russia have obviously made them extremely nervous and trigger-happy.

“Don’t shoot, its me, I am Russian.”

But its too late.

Russia continues 'Kamikaze' drone attacks; Ukraine says all 16 were downed – Air-raid sirens blared in Kyiv today as another wave of drones launched by Russia at Ukraine’s capital and other cities were intercepted, a day after Moscow carried out one of its heaviest air attacks since it invaded its neighbor more than 10 months ago.

Ukrainian officials said military air defenses destroyed “all” of the 16 Iranian-made Shahed drones Russian forces fired at Kyiv and other cities.

Comment – (i) Ukraine looks to be increasing its success strike rate against these Russian drones, indicating receipt of more advanced anti-missile weaponry and (ii) Russia continues to act cowardly by hiding behind air and Russia-launched missiles against innocent women and children.

Ukrainian drone unit tracks Russian forces around Bakhmut - As fighting rages in Ukraine's Donetsk region, Russian forces around the city of Bakhmut are said to be exhausted. Ukrainian troops are relying upon their extensive air reconnaissance operations to track enemy movements. On the front line, an elite drone unit known as The Wings of Madyar is providing real-time information to Ukrainian artillery batteries. Current Time's Borys Sachalko spent a day with a drone crew near Bakhmut as they watched Russian troops from above.

Ukraine struck multiple Russian supply hubs – Ukrainian forces have again struck multiple enemy supply tracks and hubs. These have been to the east of Kremynna in the north and behind Russian lines in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. They have also hit arms depots and command posts in Crimea.

Old Ukrainian tanks do double duty as battlefield artillery near Bakhmut - Ukrainian tank crews in the eastern Donetsk region are using retrofitted T-64s, designed in the 1960s, to shell Russian troops. They fire from hidden positions using coordinates provided by drones. When massed Russian infantry attacks, Ukrainian tanks move directly onto the battlefield.

One has to hand it to Ukrainian dedication and ingenuity – they take their dated Russian-designed tanks, some from the 1960’s, and then they add everything they can or have seized in battle – and re-configure them into modernized

weapons. They are retro-fitting them with barrels for NATO caliber artillery, cannabolizing damaged tanks for spares and re-building.

These then they deploy as artillery flanks, drawing Russian fire and destroying enemy positions, Very clever.

Russia 'struggling to counter air threats' on its own territory - Russia is finding it difficult to combat air threats on its own land as it continues its war with Ukraine, according to the latest British intelligence update.

"Russia has long given a very high priority to maintaining advanced ground based air defences, but it is increasingly clear that it is struggling to counter air threats deep inside Russia," the U.K. Ministry of Defence said Thursday in an intelligence briefing on Twitter.

The ministry referenced the drone attack on Russia's Engels Air Base on Monday, which Russian authorities said left three servicemen dead, blaming Ukraine for the strike.

"One challenge for Russia is probably the exceptional demand on its fleet of modern, medium-range air defence systems, such as SA-22 Pantsir, which would typically be expected to take a major role in countering UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles]," the ministry said.

The ministry continued: "As well as providing point defence for strategic sites such as Engels, these systems are currently required in large number to protect field headquarters near the front line in Ukraine."

Impacts

Failure at Bakhmut would be 'psychologically' damaging for Russia - If Russia ultimately fails in its grinding effort to seize the embattled Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, such a setback would have political implications and be a psychological blow for Russian forces, according to one expert.

Russia has been trying to capture the city in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region for months, reportedly losing large numbers of soldiers and rapidly depleting ammunition and other supplies. Forces aligned with the Russian mercenary Wagner Group, founded by Russian oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin, have reportedly been leading the assault.

Though Russia has reportedly secured some marginal gains around Bakhmut in the past few weeks, recent analyses indicate that its prospects of continuing current operations against the city are dim. The Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a U.S. think tank, wrote in its Wednesday campaign assessment that the Bakhmut offensive is likely "culminating."

"U.S. military doctrine defines culmination as the 'point at which a force no longer has the capability to continue its form of operations, offense or defense,' and 'when a force cannot continue the attack and must assume a defensive posture or execute an operational pause,'" the ISW wrote in the assessment.

Retired U.S. Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, who formerly served as the commanding general of the U.S. Army Europe, told Newsweek that the credibility of Prigozhin and the Wagner Group is at stake in the Bakhmut battle.

If the forces are ultimately forced to withdraw from Bakhmut or end their effort there, Hodges said, this will be a "blow" to Prigozhin's prestige and "psychologically" damaging to the Russians overall.

On the other hand, if Russia somehow took Bakhmut or Ukraine decided that it wasn't important enough militarily to keep expending men and resources on, "you can be sure the Russians would play that up in the biggest possible way for their own audience," Hodges said.

Experts have previously told Newsweek that Russia does not have much to gain strategically or militarily by seizing Bakhmut. But it could be symbolic for Russian President Vladimir Putin, so he can show some type of military victory after facing embarrassing setbacks in the war.

Bulgaria moves to replace Russian nuclear fuel supplies - Bulgaria's sole nuclear power plant has signed a nuclear fuel supply deal with a French firm in an effort to replace shipments from Russia in the wake of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. The state-owned Kozloduy plant on the Danube River currently relies on Russian fuel for its two Soviet-built 1,000-megawatt reactors. Under the 10-year agreement signed on December 30, Framatome, a subsidiary of French energy giant EDF, will supply nuclear fuel to Kozloduy's Unit 5 reactor from early 2025. Last week, Kozloduy signed a similar contract with Westinghouse Electric Sweden to deliver nuclear fuel for its other operational reactor from 2024.

Russia's Investigative Committee Requests Arrest Warrant For Mediazona's Verzilov - Russia's Investigative Committee has asked a Moscow court to issue an arrest warrant for Pyotr Verzilov, the publisher of the independent media website Mediazona, for allegedly hiding his dual citizenship. A court hearing is scheduled for January 9, said Pavel Chikov of the legal defense organization Agora. In November 2021, after Verzilov organized rallies to protest the arrest of opposition politician Aleksei Navalny, Russia placed Verzilov on its wanted list, accusing him of failing to report his Canadian citizenship. Verzilov is currently outside of Russia.

Chinese fighter jet and US military plane nearly collide - A Chinese fighter jet maneuvered itself in front of an American reconnaissance plane over the South China Sea on Dec. 21 and came within 20 feet (6 meters) of a crash, according to the U.S. military.

The Chinese Navy J-11 fighter jet suddenly flew in front of the nose of the U.S. Air Force RC-135 plane, forcing the latter to take evasive action, a statement from the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said.

The American military said its plane "was lawfully conducting routine operations over the South China Sea in international airspace."

Sanctions

IOC sanctions against Russia, Belarus 'to remain firmly in place'- International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach has reiterated that sanctions against Russia and Belarus in connection with Russia's invasion of Ukraine must remain in place. Bach also said in a New Year's message published on December 30 that the IOC will continue to support Ukraine's Olympic community. The IOC imposed sanctions on the Russian and Belarusian governments and states shortly after the start of the invasion in late February. They include no international sports events in the two countries and none of their symbols displayed at events.

Containment

NATO - In an interview with the German news agency dpa, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg called on the alliance's members to supply more weapons to Ukraine, saying it was "in all our security interests to make sure Ukraine prevails."

"It may sound like a paradox, but military support for Ukraine is the fastest way to peace. We know that most wars end at the negotiating table -- probably this war, too -- but we know that what Ukraine can achieve in these negotiations depends inextricably on the military situation," he added. Stoltenberg said Russian President Vladimir Putin has given no indication that he has changed his overall objective of the war -- "to control Ukraine" -- making it necessary to "prepare for the long haul and also for new Russian offensives."

"We should not underestimate Russia," he said.

Early on December 30, the General Staff of Ukraine's armed forces said that Russian forces had launched 85 missile strikes, 35 air strikes, and 63 strikes from multiple-rocket launch systems over the past 24 hours.

UK military support for Ukraine continues with delivery of counter explosive ordnance equipment - Hundreds of metal detectors and bomb de-arming kits have been donated to help clear minefields and unexploded ordnance as part of the latest package.

The UK has donated more than 1,000 VALLON metal detectors and 100 bomb de-arming kits to Ukraine to help clear minefields and make safe reclaimed territory, civilian homes, and infrastructure.

The deliveries are the latest in a continuous supply of support that the UK has been providing Ukraine throughout 2022 and which will continue in 2023. The UK has also recently provided a significant package of air defence systems, including more than 1,000 air anti-air missiles and 125 anti-aircraft guns, to defend Ukraine against Russian strikes on its cities and infrastructure.

Geopolitical

Kremlin 'concerned' about Karabakh road blockade, says will continue talks - Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on December 29 that it was "concerned" about tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan over a two-week-old blockade of the only road linking the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, and that talks with the two sides would continue. The so-called Lachin Corridor, which allows supplies from Armenia to reach the 120,000 ethnic Armenians in the mountainous enclave, has been policed by Russian peacekeepers since 2020. Azerbaijani civilians identifying themselves as environmental activists have blockaded the road since December 12.

Putin says Russia expects China's Xi to make state visit in Spring - Russian President Vladimir Putin said on December 30 that he was expecting Chinese President Xi Jinping to make a state visit to Russia in spring 2023, in what would be a public show of solidarity from Beijing amid Russia's war in Ukraine. Though Western countries imposed unprecedented sanctions on Russia, China has refrained from condemning Moscow. However, Beijing has so far been careful not to provide the sort of direct material support that could provoke Western sanctions against China.

Iran holds military drill near strategic Strait Of Hormuz – The Strait is of extremely high geostrategic importance and is the world's most important oil chokepoint because of the large volumes flowing through the strait, estimated at approximately 20% of global movement.

Iran has long recognized its leverage in this regard, and keeps a fleet of small attack craft always at the ready in order to sink vessels along the strait so as to block it, severely harming international economies and trade.

Reports surfaced years ago of new Russian-made sea mines being provided to Iran for this purpose. These mines are embedded in the seabed so as to avoid detection, and are activated by remote trigger.

So a young non-descript sailor in a small fishing vessel can float around the Strait with a fishing rod, lunch box and bottle of water, but also with a trigger. When the American fleet or a VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) sails through, it can be sunk with these mines rising out of the seabed. Mission accomplished.

Countries rally to develop mine-detection systems – Given international awareness of these hidden mines, together with detection of conventional sea mine types, navies around the world are developing mine-detection systems to defeat these “ghost” armaments.

Looking at South Korea for example, they have designed and developed their New 'Navy Sea GHOST' Concept, a new operational concept that combines the use of manned and unmanned systems.

As part of the "National Defense Revolution 4.0" proposed by the Ministry of National Defense, the Navy Sea GHOST system envisions a lean and mobile force that involves close cooperation between manned and unmanned systems. Under the concept, the navy will acquire advanced artificial intelligence technology and several unmanned systems. The ROK Navy is also planning on strengthening its datalink capabilities to secure communications between different assets.

It was also revealed that the underwater autonomous mine surveillance system and neutralization system, currently in development by LIG Nex1 and Hanwha Systems respectively, will first be tested on the ROKS Sohae, a Yangyang-class minesweeper by 2027.



Of particular note is the concept image that was revealed during the ceremony. The image appears to show a new ship that is very different from any currently operated by the ROK Navy or designs for future ships released so far.

Deployment of mines – Russia has developed a clandestine method of deploying anti-ship sea mines which is comprised of a stepped approach so as to avoid detection.

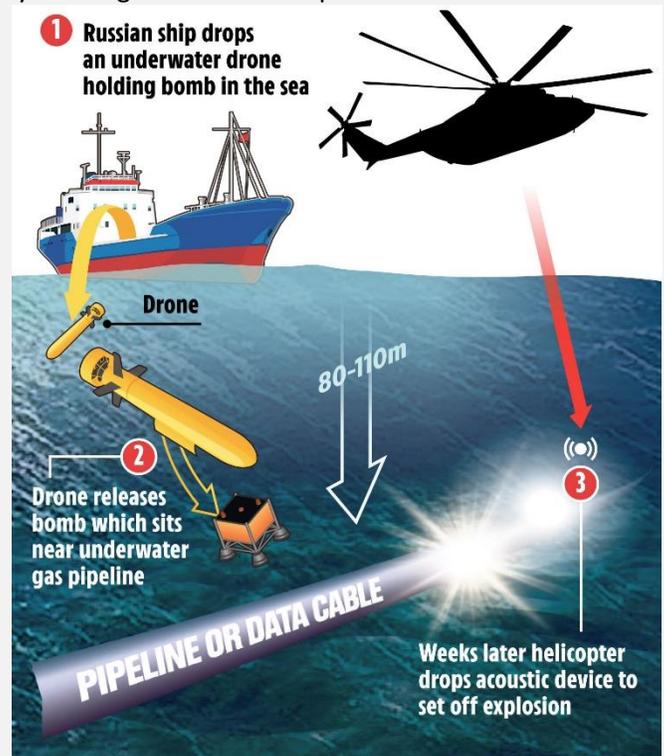
After attacks on the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines sent millions of cubic metres of methane boiling to the sea's surface and pushed sky-high gas prices even higher, NATO navies are reacting by deploying detection vessels and systems into the area.

UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace ordered a Type 23 frigate and the survey ship HMS Enterprise to face down the potential threats. Enterprise uses sonar and mini sub drones to scan the seabed for signs of interference such as mines and monitors on cables and pipes.

Norway has also ramped up security after threats to its offshore gas platforms from drones.

Mr Wallace refused to explicitly blame Russia for the Nord Stream blasts.

But he said Russian spy ships were routinely seen near our critical national infrastructure.



“Unseen War”

There is an ongoing but “Unseen War” underway, with China and Russia aggressively yet clandestinely determining and developing geopolitical expansion strategies. These include underwater technology to expand surface and seabed assertions to territory they unilaterally claim as their sole rights of passage and development.

China

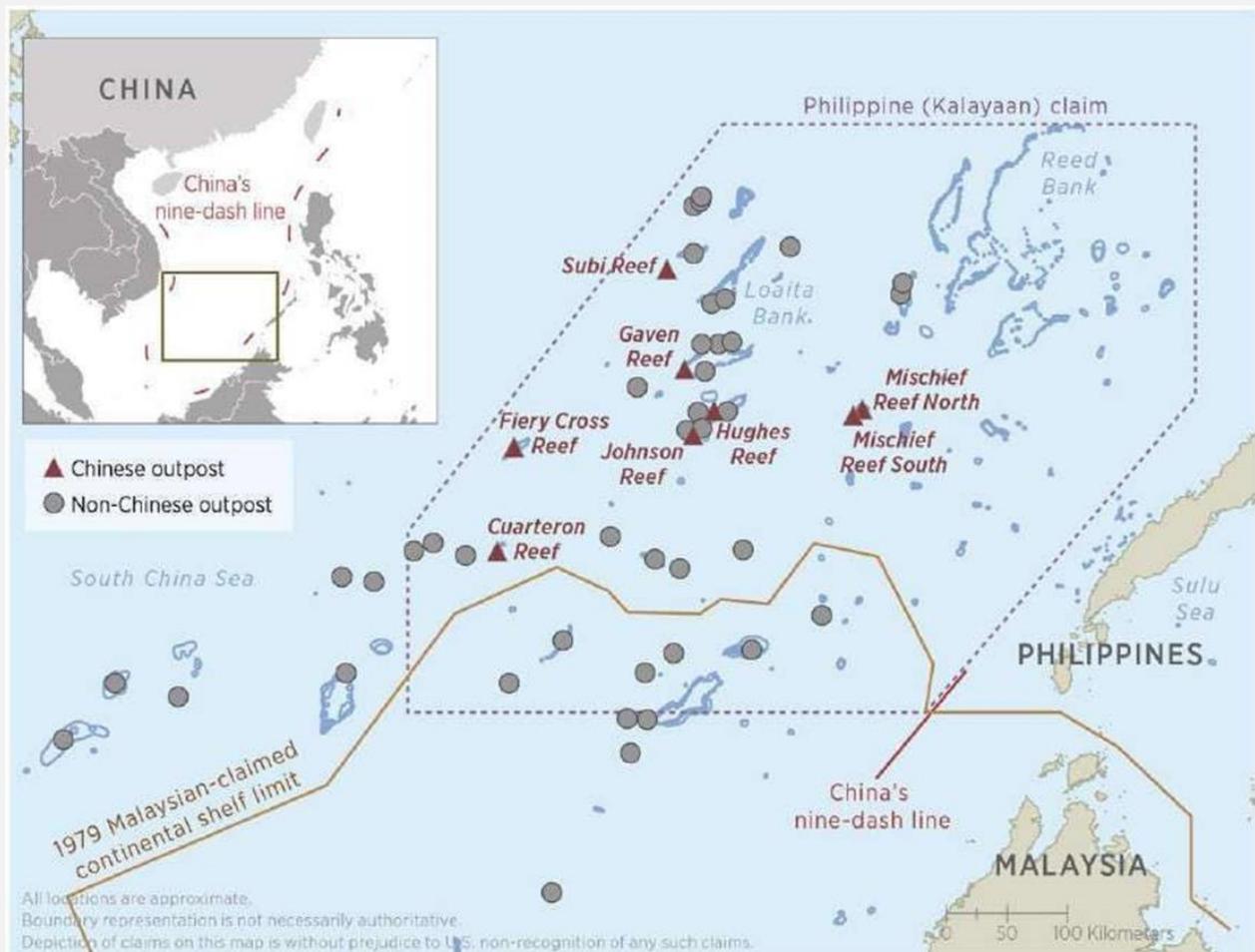
China is expressing and pursuing increasing interest in the South China Sea, Arctic and Antarctic Sea zones together with global sources of strategic minerals, ores, energy and food.

Its economy is totally export-based and in turn hugely dependent on exports to keep its peasant population – 1.1 billion citizens – in check, needing to ensure that nothing impedes this. It has to secure access to both global markets and resources to sustain its population. Otherwise it will see another “1949-style” revolution.

South China Sea

It has developed open sea island growth technology where they inject materials into coral reefs and grow them, followed by conventional ballast and blockage systems to bring these “reefs” to the ocean surface, then reinforce them to establish a new “island,” upon which they construct military and naval capabilities.

It has fully militarized several islands built in the disputed South China Sea (see map below), arming them with anti-ship and anti-aircraft missile systems, laser and jamming equipment and fighter jets in an increasingly aggressive move that threatens all nations operating nearby, a top US military commander said.



“The function of those islands is to expand the offensive capability of the PRC beyond their continental shores,” US Indo-Pacific commander Admiral John C Aquilino said. “They can fly fighters, bombers plus all those offensive capabilities of missile systems.” China routinely objects to any action by the US military in the region.

The other parties – the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei – claim all or part of the sea, through which approximately \$5tn in goods are shipped every year – nearly 30% of global trade.

Their self-proclaimed claims have been refuted by other countries and found illegal by a ruling in 2016 by an international tribunal at The Hague finding that it had violated international law with its actions.

China realizes it cannot successfully compete with US naval power in conventional terms. So instead they have created an “alternative navy” by constructing a series of man-made islands, militarizing them, and so extending their “navy.”

Missiles placed upon these islands have ranges sufficient to reach South Korea, Japan, other South China Sea countries and US military bases.

China is also stationing “fishing” vessels around the South China Sea reportedly armed with rail guns and positioned as “dormant” cells, waiting activation, should it be deemed necessary. Their rationale being that a “million dollar” missile from an expendable “fishing vessel” is a good bet against a “billion dollar” aircraft carrier.

The US has its “First Island Chain” policy, detailed in a previous Update, whereby it can effectively blockade any sea movement into and out of China at a moment’s notice.

These islands are China’s way of combatting this policy .

Thus China absolutely requires unimpeded access to the South China Sea – the “**1st Route.**”

Chinese Export Security Strategy

China is also developing its “Blue Water” strategy whereby it can align with friendly nations around the globe in order to construct a deep water naval capability, but requires bases through which to achieve this.

In line with its “Blue Water” strategy is the BRI (Belt Road Initiative) whereby it is simultaneously creating a land bridge across Central Asia to connect export activities by rail – the “**2nd Route.**”

Ultimately, China wants to solve the Malacca dilemma which gives it the status of a green-water navy. Beijing is, therefore, looking at a distant future, when the melting ice-cap in the Arctic would allow it to create the Arctic Sea route or the Polar Silk Road – the “**3rd Route.**”

Fully 68% of its export economy is destined for the US and the EU markets, effectively making China an extension of American and European economies – they are the manufacturing and supply hub for them. What happens in these two markets has a direct impact on Chinese well-being, a principle reason why China invests so heavily in these areas to ensure they do not fail. Failure in these two markets sees failure in China.

Which is why they strategically need to create a new “World Order” with Russia to break this dependency.

China’s need for access and resources has taken it to the two extreme points of the planet - the Arctic in the North and the Antarctic in the South. Situated at a far distance from both the North Pole and the South Pole, China ideally shouldn’t have anything to do with these two parts of the world, but then Chinese expansionism knows no bounds.

Arctic

China claims that the Arctic is a part of the global commons and at the same time elevated itself to a higher position by calling itself the “Near-Arctic State” that allows Beijing to come up with a moniker of the NSR, the “Polar Silk Road.”

The distance from Shanghai to German ports is over 4,600km shorter via the Northern Route than via the Suez Canal.

China has also been ramping up its efforts in the far north, taking a long-term view of developments and opportunities presented by the impacts of climate change in the region.

It does not enjoy any coastline in the Arctic and became an observer nation on the Arctic Council in 2013.

It published its own Arctic strategy in January 2018 and famously declared itself a “Near-Arctic State” and outlined a ‘Polar Silk Road’ economic plan.

At the time, a US official called the self-designation ‘absurd’ and pointed out China is located 1,844 miles (3,000km) from the Arctic Circle. Nonetheless, China’s Arctic activity will arouse concerns over the strategic implications of its economic activities and whether they might take on a military dimension in the longer term.

It exhibited models of its new ice-capable LNG carriers, while previous reports have indicated it has built or is building a number of hardened-hull cargo ships. Designing and building polar-capable ships has been a stated policy objective of the People’s Republic since 2016, beginning with the thirteenth Five-Year Plan. For China, regular use of the Northern Route would be an economic boon.

Antarctic

A growing Chinese presence in the Antarctic is turning out to be quite an issue for the international community and especially for Australia which claims 42 per cent of Antarctica.

Beijing’s interests happen to be primarily related to transportation and logistics with little regard for its real geographical position.

(See below for further comment on the Antarctic).

Russia

Arctic

A great deal of attention is being paid to Russia’s increasing activities in the Arctic, and, rightly so, since Russia is an Arctic nation, with approximately one-fifth of its territory north of the Arctic Circle. Russia is also home to the largest Arctic population.

It in turn has been pursuing aggressive actions in the Arctic and has invited China to join it in developing self-claimed grabs of international sea territory.

China is investing heavily in projects in nearly every Arctic country and in Russia it has invested billions into extracting energy sources from beneath the permafrost on the Yamal Peninsula.

During a visit to Russia in June 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping presided over the launch of a joint venture to build the ice-capable LNG tanker ships that were recently exhibited, composed of the Chinese company Cosco and Russia’s Sovcomflot, with funding provided by Russian energy group Novatek and Beijing’s Silk Road Fund.

Xi is scheduled to again visit Russia in 2023.

Russia has quietly been investing huge amounts in the Arctic, developing military bases, sea capabilities and underwater technologies to cement these claims as Russian.

It plans a Northern Sea Route (NSR) allowing Moscow to access the European Continent with far greater ease, facilitated by global warming creating new warm water ports and naval bases. Russia claims that the five countries with direct access to the Arctic Ocean are the biggest stakeholders in the region in line with the International Maritime Law.

Such a declaration allows Russia to claim a Northern Sea Route in its territorial waters.

Russia extends its claim to the Arctic Ocean seabed

Russia has formally enlarged its claim to the seabed in the Arctic Ocean stretching from points near the North Pole to Greenland's and Canada's exclusive economic zones.

Noticeably, it has not extended its claim into waters north of Alaska that are known to be part of the U.S. sphere of interests, even though Russian vessels appear to have collected data about the seabed in these waters in 2020.

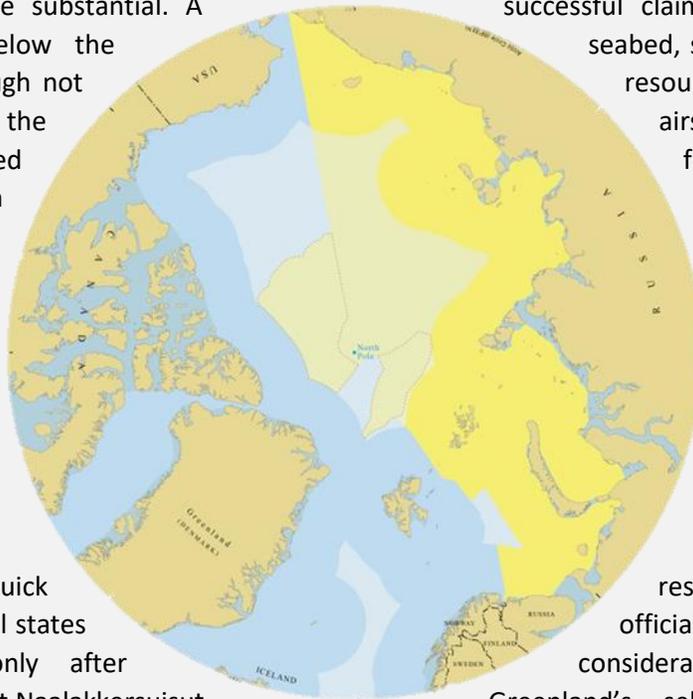
Philip Steinberg, professor of political geography and director of the Centre for Border Research at the University of Durham, estimated Russia is enlarging its claim by approximately 705,000 square kilometers.

The Russian claim now covers some 70 percent of the seabed in the central parts of the Arctic Ocean outside the EEZs of the Arctic coastal states, Steinberg explained.

The underlying interests are substantial. A rights to all resources below the any other resources — though not the ocean surface or in the the resources on the seabed regulate traffic in the area in on the seabed.

Most experts expect the peacefully, as the states to follow the rules of the documents are written in established procedures and Ottawa, Copenhagen or as yet.

There is little tradition for quick 2015, the other Arctic coastal states claim by Russia, but only after Nuuk would only confirm that Naalakkersuisut, informed about Russia's enlarged claim (Greenland is party to the process through Denmark).



successful claim will bring with it exclusive seabed, such as oil and gas, minerals or resources in the water column, on airspace above. With the rights to follow also certain rights to order to protect those riches

process to continue involved seem determined UN. The two Russian strict accordance with no comments from either Nuuk have been forthcoming

responses in these proceedings. In officially acknowledged a renewed considerably longer time. A source in Greenland's self-rule authority, has been

Russia has built a fleet of icebreaker vessels that is more than double that of the rest of the world combined.

We can expect to see international geopolitical challenge and confrontation in this regard in the near future.

Russian company Hydroprigor unveils UUV for seabed warfare

Marine Underwater Arms — Hydroprigor Company displayed at Army-2021 forum an underwater unmanned vehicle (UUV) for seabed survey capable of three-month autonomous navigation.

“The autonomous carrier of hydro-physical equipment of variable buoyancy (ANGAPP) is used for underwater reconnaissance and electronic warfare. It can be used for seabed reconnaissance for the installation of an underwater object,”

Deputy Designer General Mikhail Kettuev told TASS the craft has no engine and operates due to the pump over of the liquid in the hull and changing float depending on the position. “For the craft to float, it is necessary to boot it into the maneuvering software of

The payload can include a camera, magnetometers, sonars, and other devices. can operate for a long time and submergence depth is 300

ANGAPP can survey the whether unidentified objects for mines. Seabed mines stone,” Kettuev said.



inside computer,” he said.

camera, magnetometers, “The speed is not high, but it and sail 1.5 km per hour. The meters,” he said.

seabed in navy bases. “It sees have appeared. It can search usually mud up and look like a

Russia is using this and other undersea technology to intimately explore the Arctic seabed. It is also using advanced technology to fully understand the hidden resources and treasures around the North Pole, activity guiding its geopolitical claims and statements.

Antarctica

Down South in Antarctica, the issues are a little different. Antarctica is far more regulated than the Arctic as the Antarctic Treaty System signed in Washington on December 1, 1959 bars mining activities, establishment of military bases and weapons testing. The Continent is reserved for encouraging scientific research only.

There was an Antarctic cutback in research activities by countries like Australia and the United States, but it is believed that both Russia and China have been taking advantage of the Pandemic to build on their presence in the southern continent. A great power game in Antarctica could unfold anytime soon as China lays claim on the Antarctic.

Their interests are driven by several factors. One is fishing. China dried up its coastal fisheries due to overfishing and is now exploring other parts of the world like the Galapagos Islands in Latin America. Antarctica is also on its radar.

While the rest of the world was cutting down on Antarctic research due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, Chinese company, Shanghai Chonghe Marine Industry, was acquiring the largest Antarctic krill-fishing boat to be completed by the year 2023. Krill, a tiny crustacean crucial to the Antarctic ecosystem as it forms a diet of several creatures in the region is already in danger due to increasing global demand. And now, Beijing wants more of it because Krill is used as oil and feed in China.

China is preparing itself well in advance. It knows that the Antarctic Treaty will be up for a standard review in 2048-around 25 years down the line. It wants to take the lead and be prepared to dominate the Continent by that time.

The “Great Polar Game”

The warming of the Arctic and the opening – at least for a few months a year – of the Northern Route has whetted both China’s and Russia’s appetites for delving into areas such as fisheries, mining, petroleum and shipping.

The Arctic includes Russia, Denmark (including Greenland), Canada, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and the US, as seen in the map below.



US Geological Survey estimates that the Arctic holds approximately 90 billion barrels of undiscovered oil – about 13% of global estimates – and 30% of the Earth’s undiscovered natural gas.

The strategic attraction of the southern front in Antarctica with its abundant natural resource pool is similarly whetting everyone’s attention and desires for control. The Roman system of satisfying its “Roman Hierarchy of Needs” is not defunct, but thriving in its modern version. The world has to feed its people in order to survive.

The West and NATO are as keenly aware of this and gearing to secure this area.

Is there an “Economic Hit” being enacted against China by invoking a recession and slowing spending in the US and EU?

Any slowdown extends to a drop in demand for goods and services, particularly from China. Economic hits are not uncommon in today’s geopolitical world.

Any drop in Chinese demand affects their export volumes. Even a 1% or 2% slip, coupled with the effects of COVID, can be catastrophic for the Chinese economy. Is this something aimed at crippling a future Chinese threat?

Is Russia using Ukraine as a stepping stone to the Baltic countries and then to Finland, another Arctic claimant?

Or is this why war is being waged in Ukraine – to drain the Russian threat?

Is this why Russia is so paranoid about Sweden and Finland joining NATO?

Looking at the map alongside, Russia and China are in red together with Mongolia and Belarus.

Orange reflects target countries for Russia to absorb into a new "Soviet" alignment.

Green signifies states friendly with, aligned to or engaged in one way or another with Russia and China.

This splits the central world into two power regions.

Are Russian and Chinese thinking geared to or flexing toward this new bipolar world order?

The Antarctic front puts Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Chile and Argentina in this geopolitical drama.

Is this where global order is headed?

What the current strategic global state of affairs is really about – the 50-year to 100-year term ahead?

Is the Ukrainian conflict also a battle in this new game, this new "Unseen War?"

The future of global food supply, energy and geopolitical alignment is tied up in future resource reliability and access.

Energy, water and food are gateways to future dominance, and all parties realize this.

Control of Arctic and Antarctic resources provides future global control and monopolistic leverage - a huge geopolitical advantage.

But this is largely an "unseen" conflict as focus around the globe concentrates on the Pandemic, Ukraine, climate control, alternative energies and emerging 3rd World conflict zones.

Or so we think.

Is this the New Frontier?"

