



UNSC



*Maintaining international peace and
security in the Arctic: addressing the
militarisation of the High North and the
risk of great-power confrontation.*

BACKGROUND GUIDE

M.CT.M MUN 2026



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Letter from the Executive Board

Dear delegates,

It is our privilege to welcome you to the United Nations Security Council at the second edition of M.CT.M MUN. Over three days you will hold the only seat at the United Nations that can bind every member state, and you will discover quickly how narrow the space is in which that power can be used. For most of the post-Cold War period the Arctic was the exception that proved the rule. While the great powers competed almost everywhere else, the eight Arctic states quietly built a cooperative order in the High North: a binding search-and-rescue agreement, a moratorium on high-seas fishing, joint science, and a boundary treaty between Norway and Russia that ended a forty-year dispute without a shot being fired. Diplomats called this “Arctic exceptionalism.” It is not true any longer. Since February 2022 the region has become simultaneously one of the most militarised parts of the planet and one of the least governed. Seven of the eight Arctic states are now NATO members, and the whole of Russia’s sea-based nuclear deterrent sits on the Kola Peninsula a few hundred kilometres from the alliance’s new northern frontier. China calls itself a “near-Arctic State” and has signed an agreement with Moscow to develop the Northern Sea Route. Undersea cables are being severed by vessels whose crews then explain that their anchors slipped. In November 2025 the Russian Ministry of Defence advised the President that the Novaya Zemlya test site stood ready to resume full-scale nuclear testing. And on 5 February 2026 New START expired, leaving the two largest nuclear arsenals on earth without a single binding numerical limit for the first time since 1972.

In a development no Arctic strategist had modelled, the sharpest territorial dispute in the region today is not between NATO and Russia at all. It is inside the alliance. The United States has spent a year pressing for control of Greenland; the Kingdom of Denmark has spent a year refusing; and in January 2026 European soldiers arrived in Nuuk in an operation whose unstated purpose is to deter an ally. This Council will have to decide whether that is a matter of international peace and security or a domestic affair shielded by Article 2(7) — and the answer will not be unanimous.

Be honest with yourselves about what this Council can achieve. Three of the states most deeply implicated — the Russian Federation, the United States and China — hold the veto, and Denmark, whose territory is at the centre of the dispute, holds an elected seat. A sweeping Chapter VII resolution is not going to pass, and a delegate who spends two days drafting one has misread the room. The Council’s genuine instruments here are narrower and considerably more interesting: fact-finding under Article 34, the good offices of the Secretary-General, Arria-formula consultation, presidential statements, incident-notification and de-confliction arrangements, protection regimes for undersea infrastructure, and — if the Council truly deadlocks — Uniting for Peace. We will be far more impressed by a delegate who secures a modest, achievable mechanism than by one who tables a maximalist draft that dies on a veto.

This committee runs as a semi-crisis: you will caucus and draft as a Council, but the situation will develop around you, and you will respond through directives, press releases and negotiated memoranda of understanding, in the formats set out at the end of this guide. Committee is frozen at 5 February 2026 — nothing after that date has happened unless this Council makes it happen.



Finally: this guide is a floor, not a ceiling. We have given you the architecture of the problem, a chronology and the starting positions of the fifteen states in the room. We have deliberately not given you your own country's talking points, its defence expenditure, its voting record, its bilateral history, or the arguments it will need to defeat yours. Find those yourselves — read national strategy documents, Council meeting records and treaty texts rather than commentary, and know who your ninth vote is before you begin. Come prepared, come having read well beyond this document, and come ready to negotiate in good faith.

Warm regards,

The Executive Board,

Krishna Santhanam (Chairperson)

Vetrivel Karthikeyan (Vice-Chairperson)

Drishya Chordia (Moderator)

AGENDA: *Maintaining international peace and security in the Arctic: addressing the militarisation of the High North and the risk of great-power confrontation*

Introduction

The Arctic Ocean is ringed by eight states — Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States — of which five have Arctic coastlines. For most of the twentieth century its strategic significance was almost entirely nuclear: it was the shortest flight path between Soviet and American missile fields, and the place where ballistic-missile submarines hid under the ice. Everything else about it was frozen, literally and politically.

Three things changed that. The first is physical: the Arctic has warmed nearly four times faster than the global average since 1979, opening the Northern Sea Route for a lengthening season each year and making reachable a seabed estimated to hold thirteen per cent of the world's undiscovered oil and thirty per cent of its undiscovered gas, alongside major rare-earth deposits. The second is military: Russia has spent fifteen years reconstituting Soviet-era Arctic infrastructure to protect the sea-based deterrent based on the Kola Peninsula, and in response — above all in response to the invasion of Ukraine — Finland and Sweden abandoned generations of non-alignment to join NATO in 2023 and 2024. Seven of the eight Arctic states now belong to the same alliance. The Arctic has ceased to be a buffer and become a frontier. The third is the arrival of outside actors: China declared itself a “near-Arctic State” in 2018, and in October 2025 signed an agreement with Russia to jointly develop the Northern Sea Route.

Layered on top is a category of activity that fits no existing legal box. Since 2023 undersea cables and pipelines in the Baltic and North Atlantic have been severed by commercial vessels dragging anchors across them, in incidents investigators consider unlikely to be accidental but have repeatedly failed to prosecute, while satellite navigation over Finnmark and Lapland is jammed almost daily. None of this crosses the threshold of armed attack; all of it degrades the security of states with no clear legal remedy. And, most unexpectedly, the Arctic now hosts a dispute between allies: since December 2024 the United States has pressed publicly for control of



Greenland — a self-governing territory of the Kingdom of Denmark, a NATO member and, in 2026, an elected member of this Council — and by January 2026 eleven European states had deployed personnel there under a Danish-led operation. Whether that dispute belongs on this Council's agenda at all is itself something delegates will have to argue.

The governance response has been thin. The Arctic Council is barred from discussing military security and has not held a ministerial meeting since 2022. UNCLOS provides a framework for seabed claims but not for military restraint, and the United States has never ratified it. There is no Arctic arms-control regime, no Arctic incident-notification agreement, and no body with jurisdiction over Arctic military activity. The Council's task is therefore not to redraw the Arctic map or adjudicate sovereignty — it can do neither. It is to determine whether the militarisation of the High North is a threat to international peace and security within the meaning of Article 39, and if so, what instruments can realistically reduce the risk of confrontation, protect civilian infrastructure and shipping, establish attribution for grey-zone acts, and create channels of communication that do not presently exist.

Key Terms

1. **Arctic Council:** The region's principal intergovernmental forum, created by the 1996 Ottawa Declaration. It works by consensus, makes no binding law, and is expressly barred from dealing with military security. Six Indigenous organisations hold Permanent Participant status with full consultation rights but no vote.
2. **UNCLOS:** The 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea: the basis for all Arctic maritime claims. The United States has signed but never ratified it, and participates only through customary law.
3. **Extended Continental Shelf (Article 76):** The right to seabed resources beyond 200 nautical miles where the seabed is a natural prolongation of a state's landmass. Claims go to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), which rules only on the science — overlapping claims must still be negotiated. Russia, Canada and Denmark all claim the Lomonosov Ridge, which runs past the North Pole.
4. **Bastion Defence:** Russia's concept of protecting its ballistic-missile submarines in a defended maritime zone — in the Arctic, the Barents Sea — using layered air defence, coastal missiles and attack submarines. Almost all Russian Arctic infrastructure serves this concept.
5. **Northern Sea Route (NSR):** The shipping route along Russia's Arctic coast. Russia requires transit permission and levies escort fees, relying on UNCLOS Article 234 on ice-covered waters; the United States rejects this as an assertion of control the Convention does not grant. The navigable season lengthens each year as ice retreats.
6. **Svalbard Treaty (1920):** Grants Norway sovereignty over Svalbard while giving all signatories equal resource access and prohibiting warlike use. Norway and Russia disagree on its geographic and substantive scope.
7. **Grey-Zone (Hybrid) Operations:** Coercion deliberately kept below the threshold of armed attack — sabotage presented as accident, jamming or spoofing of satellite navigation, economic pressure — designed to impose costs while denying the target a legal basis for response. Often carried out using the "shadow fleet": ageing, opaquely owned, third-flagged tankers moving sanctioned cargo.



8. **Critical Undersea Infrastructure:** Submarine power cables, data cables and pipelines — largely unprotected, mostly in international waters, and carrying the overwhelming majority of global data traffic.
9. **New START:** The 2010 US–Russian treaty limiting deployed strategic warheads and delivery systems, with associated inspections. It expired on 5 February 2026 with no successor and no replacement verification regime.
10. **Article 39, Chapter VI and Chapter VII:** Article 39 is the provision by which the Council determines a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression; everything under Chapter VII depends on it. Chapter VI concerns pacific settlement and produces non-binding recommendations, while Chapter VII authorises binding measures — sanctions under Article 41, force under Article 42. Which chapter a draft invokes is usually the most contested question in the room.
11. **The Council's Softer Instruments:** A Presidential Statement requires consensus and is not binding but carries weight; an Arria-formula meeting is informal, cannot be vetoed, and is used to hear outside voices; Uniting for Peace (GA Resolution 377A, 1950) allows the General Assembly to take up a matter the Council cannot act on because of a veto.

Background Information

1. Why the Arctic Became a Security Question

For thirty years Arctic politics rested on the premise that the region could be insulated from great-power competition elsewhere — a premise institutionalised in 1996, when the Ottawa Declaration created the Arctic Council and, at American insistence, excluded military security from its mandate. The arrangement held because the Arctic was hard to reach and there was little to fight over. Both conditions have failed. Ice loss has opened navigable water and reachable seabed, and the war in Ukraine destroyed the political basis for exceptionalism: in March 2022 the seven other Arctic states paused the Arctic Council, then chaired by Russia, and Russia left the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in September 2023. What replaced those institutions is not a new institution but a bare military balance, and neither side has a mechanism for talking to the other about it. Keep in view too that roughly four million people live north of the Arctic Circle, including some forty Indigenous peoples whose organisations hold recognised standing in Arctic governance and none at all in this Council.

2. Russia's Posture: The Bastion and Its Limits

Almost everything Russia does in the Arctic follows from one fact: the Kola Peninsula hosts the Northern Fleet and the ballistic-missile submarines that constitute the survivable part of Russia's nuclear arsenal. The operational concept is bastion defence — holding the Barents Sea so those submarines can reach launch positions unmolested. Since roughly 2007 Russia has reactivated some fifty Soviet-era Arctic sites, including the "Arctic Trefoil" complex at Nagurskoye and "Northern Clover" at Temp on Kotelny Island, deployed S-400 air defence and Bastion-P coastal missiles, and maintained the world's only nuclear icebreaker fleet — roughly forty icebreakers in total, six of them nuclear.

This is not uniform strength. Russia's specialised Arctic ground formations were redeployed to Ukraine and heavily attrited, the Northern Fleet lost its separate military-district status in early 2024, and several analysts assess Russian activity in the European Arctic as stable or declining since 2022 and oriented towards holding the



bastion rather than expanding. The honest picture is a state formidable at the nuclear and maritime level, stretched conventionally, and increasingly reliant on signalling to compensate — the Burevestnik and Poseidon tests of late 2025, and the 5 November advice to President Putin that Novaya Zemlya stood ready. No detonation has occurred. Preparations are not a test, and delegates should represent that distinction accurately.

3. NATO's Northern Enlargement

Finland's accession in April 2023 and Sweden's in March 2024 produced the largest change to Arctic strategic geography since 1949, giving NATO a contiguous northern landmass and placing alliance territory directly adjacent to the Kola bastion. In December 2025 NATO extended Joint Force Command Norfolk's remit to Denmark, Finland and Sweden. Alliance activity concentrates on exercises (Nordic Response, Steadfast Defender), surveillance including Norway's Globus radar at Vardø, and increasingly the protection of undersea infrastructure.

A recurring weakness is icebreaking capacity: against Russia's forty vessels the United States has effectively two operational polar icebreakers. The response has been the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort, announced by the United States, Canada and Finland in July 2024 and translated into shipbuilding contracts in December 2025. Note its shape — a plurilateral capability-sharing arrangement negotiated entirely outside any UN framework, and a plausible model for what this Council might encourage rather than command.

4. Greenland: The Fracture Inside the West

Greenland is a self-governing territory of the Kingdom of Denmark with a population of roughly 57,000, overwhelmingly Inuit. Under the 2009 Self-Government Act it controls most domestic affairs and holds a recognised right to pursue independence by referendum; defence and foreign affairs remain with Copenhagen. Its strategic value is disproportionate: it sits astride the shortest routes between North America and Eurasia, hosts the American Pituffik Space Base under a 1951 bilateral agreement, and holds very large rare-earth deposits at a moment when China dominates global refining.

From late December 2024 the incoming US administration made acquisition of Greenland an explicit objective, declining to rule out economic coercion; Denmark answered with successive Arctic defence packages and the US Vice-President visited Pituffik in March 2025. Greenlandic politics ran separately: the March 2025 election was won by the centre-right Demokraatit, and Jens-Frederik Nielsen took office in April leading a four-party unity coalition. Every significant Greenlandic party favours eventual independence; almost none favours American sovereignty, and January 2025 polling found roughly 85 per cent opposed to joining the United States. The crisis then sharpened — a special envoy in December, a statement on 9 January 2026 that the United States would act “whether they like it or not,” the launch of Danish-led Operation Arctic Endurance on 12 January with personnel from ten other European states, and around 22 January a claimed “framework” with no published detail, against Danish insistence that annexation “would mark the end of NATO.”

The file raises questions with no comfortable answers. Is a dispute between two NATO members over a self-governing territory a threat to international peace and security, or an internal matter under Article 2(7)? Does Greenlandic self-determination give the Council standing, and if so, who speaks for Greenland here? Remember that the United States holds a veto and Denmark holds a seat.



5. Grey-Zone Operations and the Attribution Problem

Since October 2023 undersea power cables, data cables and pipelines linking Finland, Estonia, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Germany have been repeatedly damaged. The pattern is consistent: a commercial vessel drags its anchor for a long distance, severing what it crosses, and the crew claims an accident. The clearest case is the tanker Eagle S, seized by Finland in December 2024 after Estlink 2 and four data cables were cut; a Finnish court dismissed the charges in October 2025 because intent could not be proven. That dismissal is the heart of the problem: sabotage presented as navigational negligence is extraordinarily hard to prosecute, and outside territorial waters coastal-state jurisdiction over a foreign-flagged vessel is thin. Without attribution there is no lawful basis for countermeasures.

NATO's response has been operational rather than legal — Baltic Sentry from January 2025 and the UK-led Nordic Warden — which raises costs but does not close the legal gap. A parallel problem is interference with satellite navigation over Finnmark and Finnish Lapland, widely attributed to electronic warfare units on the Kola Peninsula and now disrupting civil aviation, shipping and search-and-rescue almost daily. Like cable-cutting it is cheap, deniable and below any threshold triggering self-defence, and no forum has jurisdiction over it.

6. China and the Sino-Russian Polar Axis

China's Arctic engagement began as scientific and commercial: a 2018 white paper declaring "near-Arctic State" status, polar research icebreakers, a station at Ny-Ålesund on Svalbard, and Arctic Council observer status alongside India, Japan, South Korea and several European states. Since 2022 it has become far more closely tied to Russia — a coast guard agreement in 2023, joint naval activity near Alaska, the first joint Russian–Chinese bomber patrol into the Alaskan ADIZ in July 2024, and the October 2025 agreement on the Northern Sea Route. Meanwhile Western states have blocked Chinese investment in Greenlandic and Nordic infrastructure on security grounds. The result is a region where China is being pushed towards Russia by the very policies meant to limit its influence.

7. The Collapse of Strategic Arms Control

The Arctic is where American and Russian nuclear forces are physically closest, which makes arms control an Arctic question rather than an abstract one. That architecture has essentially collapsed: the INF Treaty lapsed in 2019, Russia de-ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 2023, and on 5 February 2026 New START expired with no successor after Washington declined Putin's September 2025 offer to observe the central limits informally. There is now no binding limit on either strategic arsenal and — equally important — no inspection or data-exchange regime through which either state can verify the other. Combined with the Novaya Zemlya preparations, this creates a specific Arctic risk: intense military activity, no communication channels, no verification, no agreed rules of behaviour. Consider whether measures unachievable globally might still be achievable regionally: incident notification, exercise pre-notification, hotlines and agreed procedures for encounters at sea have historically been negotiable between adversaries who agree on nothing else.

8. Legal and Governance Gaps

International law addresses the Arctic in fragments, and the current crisis lives in the gaps between them.



- **Seabed sovereignty is unresolved.** Russia, Canada and Denmark all claim the Lomonosov Ridge. The CLCS largely accepted Russia's science in February 2023; the Canadian and Danish submissions remain unprocessed, and the Commission cannot allocate overlapping entitlements.
- **The Arctic Council cannot discuss security.** The 1996 Ottawa Declaration excludes military security, so the region's principal institution is barred from addressing its principal problem — and has held no ministerial meeting since 2022.
- **There is no Arctic arms-control or confidence-building regime.** Unlike Antarctica, demilitarised by treaty, and unlike Cold War Europe with the Vienna Document and Open Skies, the Arctic has no limits, notifications or inspections of any kind.
- **Grey-zone acts fall outside enforceable law.** Cable damage in international waters and navigation jamming are hard to attribute, harder to prosecute, and do not constitute armed attack. The Eagle S acquittal showed that even seizing a suspect vessel may produce no legal consequence.
- **Navigational regimes are disputed.** Russia's Article 234-based NSR permitting is rejected by the United States, and Canada's claim that the Northwest Passage is internal waters is rejected by its closest ally. Both matter more as the ice retreats.
- **The United States is not a party to UNCLOS.** It asserts Arctic navigational rights under customary law while standing outside the treaty framework it invokes — a position that materially weakens Western legal argument in the region.

Timeline

Committee is frozen at 5 February 2026. Events after that date have not occurred.

Date	Event
1920–1987	The Svalbard Treaty (1920) grants Norway sovereignty with equal resource access for all signatories and an Article 9 ban on “warlike purposes.” UNCLOS is adopted in 1982 — the framework for every later Arctic claim, which the United States signs but never ratifies. Gorbachev's 1987 Murmansk speech proposes the Arctic as a “zone of peace.”
19 Sep 1996	The Ottawa Declaration creates the Arctic Council — and expressly excludes military security from its mandate.
28 May 2008	Ilulissat Declaration: the five Arctic coastal states declare UNCLOS sufficient and reject a new Arctic treaty. USGS estimates the Arctic holds ~13% of undiscovered oil and ~30% of undiscovered gas.
15 Sep 2010	Norway and Russia sign the Barents Sea delimitation treaty, ending a forty-year dispute — still the strongest precedent for negotiated Arctic settlement.
2018	China's Arctic white paper declares it a “near-Arctic State” and proposes the Polar Silk Road. The Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement is signed at Ilulissat (in force 2021).
Feb–Mar 2022	Russia invades Ukraine. The seven other Arctic states pause the Arctic Council, freezing the region's only pan-Arctic institution.
6 Feb 2023	The CLCS largely accepts Russia's Lomonosov Ridge claim while rejecting its Gakkel Ridge evidence. Overlapping Canadian and Danish claims remain unprocessed.
2023–2024	Finland joins NATO on 4 April 2023, more than doubling the alliance's land border with Russia; Sweden



Date	Event
	follows on 7 March 2024. Seven of the eight Arctic states are now allies, and only Russia stands outside.
Jul–Nov 2024	The US publishes its 2024 Arctic Strategy. The US, Canada and Finland announce and then sign the ICE Pact on icebreaker capacity. Russian and Chinese bombers fly their first joint patrol into the Alaskan ADIZ (24 July).
Dec 2024	US President-elect Trump revives the demand that the United States acquire Greenland. Days later, on 25 December, the shadow-fleet tanker Eagle S severs the Estlink 2 power cable and four data cables in the Gulf of Finland. Finland seizes the vessel; charges are dismissed in October 2025 for want of proven intent. NATO launches Baltic Sentry on 14 January 2025 to protect undersea infrastructure.
Mar–Apr 2025	Greenland's election is won by Demokraatit (29.9%, 10 of 31 seats); Jens-Frederik Nielsen becomes Premier on 7 April at the head of a four-party unity coalition. US Vice-President Vance visits Pituffik on 28 March.
Sep–Oct 2025	Putin offers to observe New START limits informally for a year; Washington does not accept. Russia tests the Burevestnik and Poseidon systems. On 14 October Russia and China agree to jointly develop the Northern Sea Route.
5 Nov 2025	Russia's Defence Minister and Chief of the General Staff advise President Putin that it is advisable to begin immediate preparations for full-scale nuclear testing, reporting Novaya Zemlya ready. No test occurs.
Dec 2025	Trump appoints a special envoy to Greenland and says the US "has to have" the island. NATO extends Joint Force Command Norfolk's remit to Denmark, Finland and Sweden. US Arctic Security Cutter contracts are awarded.
9–22 Jan 2026	Trump says the US will act on Greenland "whether they like it or not" (9 Jan). NATO and Greenland announce defence measures and Danish-led Operation Arctic Endurance deploys personnel from eleven European states to Nuuk (12 Jan). After Davos, Trump claims a "framework" exists and rules out force; Denmark says annexation "would mark the end of NATO" (~22 Jan).
5 Feb 2026	New START expires with no successor — for the first time since 1972 there is no binding limit on US or Russian strategic arsenals. COMMITTEE IS FROZEN AT THIS DATE.

The Freeze Date and the State of Play

Committee is frozen at 5 February 2026. This date is chosen because three escalations intersect on it. New START expires, ending all binding limits on American and Russian strategic forces. The Russian nuclear-testing preparations ordered on 5 November 2025 remain live and unresolved. And the Greenland crisis is at its height: European forces deployed to Nuuk three weeks earlier, the "framework" announced around 22 January remains undefined, and no party has committed to anything on paper. Do not introduce post-freeze events as fact: predictions and contingency planning are the substance of this committee, but they must be argued rather than asserted. Where the Executive Board introduces a development during committee, it becomes canon from that moment.

What the Council knows

- New START has expired with no successor. No verification or inspection regime remains between Washington and Moscow.



- Russia has publicly ordered preparations for full-scale nuclear testing at Novaya Zemlya. No test has occurred.
- The United States has stated an intention to secure control of Greenland, appointed a special envoy, and publicly ruled out force following the Davos meeting of 22 January.
- Denmark is conducting Operation Arctic Endurance with ten other European states; NATO and Greenland announced defence measures on 12 January.
- Russia and China agreed in October 2025 to jointly develop the Northern Sea Route, following their July 2024 joint bomber patrol into the Alaskan ADIZ. The Arctic Council, chaired by Denmark, has held no ministerial meeting since 2022, and the Eagle S prosecution failed.

What the Council does not know

- Whether Russia will conduct a nuclear test, and on what timeline.
- What the Greenland “framework” contains, whether Denmark or Greenland has agreed to any part of it, and whether it survives Greenlandic politics.
- Who ordered the Baltic cable incidents, whether the pattern will extend into the Barents and Norwegian Seas, and how far Sino-Russian Arctic cooperation extends into the military domain.

Major Countries and Organisations Involved

The fifteen members of the Council in 2026 are set out below. These are starting points only — a broad strategic orientation, not negotiating instructions. Finding the latter is your responsibility.

1. **Russian Federation (P5)** — The largest Arctic coastline, military presence and icebreaker fleet, and the only Arctic state outside NATO. Treats the Barents bastion as existential and northern enlargement as encirclement; has ordered test preparations at Novaya Zemlya and deepened Arctic cooperation with China. Will resist any Article 39 finding aimed at Russian deployments and will point to Greenland, NATO exercises and sanctions instead.
2. **United States (P5)** — An Arctic state through Alaska, with early-warning infrastructure at Pituffik. Simultaneously the driver of the Greenland crisis, the leader of Western capability-building through the ICE Pact, and a non-party to UNCLOS. Will treat Greenland as a bilateral matter outside the Council’s competence.
3. **China (P5)** — An Arctic Council observer with a declared “near-Arctic” identity, polar research infrastructure and a formal role in the Northern Sea Route. Frames Arctic governance as a common interest rather than exclusive coastal-state control, and opposes securitisation of regional and climate files.
4. **France (P5)** — An observer with a polar strategy and significant naval interests, aligned with European positions on Russian grey-zone activity and the inviolability of borders — awkward when the pressure on Greenland comes from Washington. A likely broker.
5. **United Kingdom (P5)** — The Arctic’s self-described “nearest neighbour,” leading the Joint Expeditionary Force and Nordic Warden, with anti-submarine responsibilities in the GIUK gap. Likely to sponsor undersea infrastructure language.

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6. **Kingdom of Denmark** — The state at the centre of the file: responsible for Greenland's defence and foreign affairs, Arctic Council chair to 2027, and convenor of Operation Arctic Endurance. Has said an American annexation of Greenland would mean the end of NATO, and must resist pressure from its own security guarantor.
7. **Greece** — The world's largest merchant fleet by tonnage, and an authoritative voice on freedom of navigation, route safety and war-risk insurance.
8. **Latvia** — A Baltic NATO state directly hit by cable damage, shadow-fleet traffic and jamming; likely to push hardest for attribution mechanisms.
9. **Panama** — A principal ship-registry state, with a stake in flag-state responsibility and registration standards — precisely where the Baltic sabotage cases failed.
10. **Pakistan** — A non-aligned voice on Council working methods and the veto, likely to ask whether an Arctic file belongs on the agenda while other crises go unaddressed.
11. **Somalia** — A coastal state with direct experience of maritime insecurity and the limits of enforcement at sea; focused on precedent and climate-security linkages.
12. **Bahrain** — A small maritime state at a chokepoint, attentive to freedom of navigation and resistant to framings that turn chokepoints into arenas of great-power contest.
13. **Colombia** — A strong multilateralist with an environmental record and no direct Arctic stake — a credible sponsor of bridging language.
14. **Democratic Republic of the Congo** — Direct experience of the link between critical-mineral extraction and conflict, and a voice on populations living above contested deposits.
15. **Liberia** — One of the largest open ship registries in the world; its position on registry due diligence will shape any attribution mechanism.

Principal Actors Outside the Room

Delegates will argue about states holding no seat here. Norway is the NATO state closest to the Russian bastion, host of the Globus radar at Vardø and of the disputed Svalbard archipelago, and the principal target of navigation jamming. Canada has the longest Arctic coastline after Russia and an unresolved Northwest Passage dispute with the United States. Finland and Sweden are NATO's newest members; Iceland has no armed forces but anchors the GIUK gap. The Government of Greenland, led by Premier Jens-Frederik Nielsen, maintains that Greenland is not for sale and that its future will be decided by Greenlanders at a referendum. Among institutions: the Arctic Council, chaired by Denmark to 2027, cannot discuss military security; NATO conducts most non-Russian Arctic military activity and its own cohesion is now part of the problem; the CLCS rules on seabed science alone and cannot resolve sovereignty; the IMO regulates shipping through the Polar Code; and the Inuit Circumpolar Council and other Permanent Participants hold recognised standing in Arctic governance but no seat here — whether and how they are heard is for you to resolve.



Previous Attempts to Address the Threat

1. **The Arctic Council (1996–present)** — Successful within its mandate — the 2011 search-and-rescue agreement, an oil-spill agreement in 2013, a science agreement in 2017 — but barred from military security, bound by consensus, and without a ministerial meeting since March 2022. Structurally incapable of addressing the current crisis.
2. **The Ilulissat Declaration (2008)** — The five coastal states declared UNCLOS sufficient and no new Arctic treaty necessary, foreclosing the “Arctic Treaty” option for a generation. Whether that judgement has survived the last four years is a legitimate question for this Council.
3. **UNCLOS and the CLCS process** — An orderly procedure for seabed claims, but the Commission rules only on geology, cannot allocate overlapping entitlements, and has no enforcement power. The Canadian and Danish submissions remain outstanding; the United States participates only at the margins.
4. **The Norway–Russia Barents Sea Treaty (2010)** — The strongest precedent that Arctic boundary disputes can be settled bilaterally and peacefully, and it has held through the collapse of almost every other channel between Oslo and Moscow — a model of what a narrow, well-verified agreement can achieve.
5. **Baltic Sentry, Nordic Warden and the ICE Pact (2024–2026)** — Patrols, automated shadow-fleet tracking and a trilateral icebreaker capability-sharing arrangement. They raise costs and rebuild capacity, but they are alliance measures rather than international ones, and Baltic Sentry has produced no successful prosecution.
6. **Council practice on climate and infrastructure** — The Arctic has never been a standing agenda item. The nearest precedents are the climate-security debates — including the December 2021 draft that won twelve votes but was vetoed — and growing attention to protecting undersea infrastructure. Both show how contested the Council’s jurisdiction here is.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

A strong outcome document engages with the following; a weak one asserts conclusions without argument.

- Does the militarisation of the High North constitute a threat to international peace and security under Article 39 — and if the Council cannot agree that it does, what can it lawfully do?
- What instrument is achievable against three vetoes: a Chapter VI or Chapter VII resolution, a presidential statement, an Arria-formula process, or a referral to the General Assembly?
- How should responsibility be established for sabotage of undersea cables and pipelines, given that intent has repeatedly proved unprovable? What obligations should fall on flag states and ship registries, and what consequences should follow attribution?
- Can the Council establish Arctic confidence-building measures — incident notification, exercise pre-notification, military-to-military channels, agreed procedures for encounters at sea and in the air — and who would administer and verify them?
- What is the Council’s relationship to the Arctic Council, the IMO and the CLCS, and how can it act without duplicating or delegitimising bodies whose mandates it cannot amend?



- Does the Greenland dispute fall within this Council's competence or is it excluded by Article 2(7)? If it is within competence, what standing do the people of Greenland have, and through whom are they heard?
- How should the Council treat the expiry of New START and the Novaya Zemlya preparations — as part of this file, a separate strategic track, or outside its remit?

Committee Documentation and Formats

Debate, caucusing and the negotiation of an outcome document proceed as in any Council simulation, but the situation will develop during committee and you are expected to respond in real time through the documents below. Anything not covered here follows the conference's standard rules of procedure, and rulings from the dais are final. Three principles govern every document. First, nothing is true until the Executive Board says it is: a directive describes an attempt, not an outcome. Second, you may only direct assets your portfolio actually controls — you cannot order another state's forces. Third, specificity wins: a document naming units, numbers, locations, budgets and timelines will succeed far more often than one expressing an intention.

1. Directives

The primary instrument of this committee: an instruction to act, in numbered operative clauses with no preambulatory language. There are three kinds.

- **Public Directive** — taken openly; other delegates will learn of it. For deployments, aid, announcements and diplomatic initiatives.
- **Private (Covert) Directive** — submitted to the dais and not read out. For intelligence work, covert deployments and contingency preparations. If discovered, it becomes public.
- **Joint Directive** — a coordinated action signed by two or more delegations, binding only its signatories.

DIRECTIVE

Committee: United Nations Security Council — M.CT.M MUN 2026

Type: Public / Private / Joint Date (in-committee): [DD Month YYYY]

Submitted by: [Delegation(s)] Signatories: [Names and portfolios]

Title: [Short operational title]

1. [Action clause — who does what, with what, where, when, at what cost.]
2. [Second action clause.]
3. [Reporting or follow-up requirement, if any.]

Resources committed: [Personnel, platforms, funding, timeframe]

Authorising portfolio: [Name, title, delegation]

2. Press Releases

Addressed to the public and the media rather than to a government. It shapes opinion and may frame, spin, obscure or pre-empt, but takes no operational action. Nothing in a press release is required to be true — expect the Executive Board and rival delegations to test it.

**PRESS RELEASE**

Issued by: [Delegation / ministry / named spokesperson]
For immediate release — [DD Month YYYY]

HEADLINE IN CAPITALS

[Opening paragraph: the message in two sentences.]

[Supporting detail, an attributed quotation from a named official, and any policy announcement.]

Media contact: [Name, title, delegation]

3. Memoranda of Understanding

A negotiated framework between two or more delegations, and the natural vehicle for anything that cannot survive a vote of the full Council: de-confliction arrangements, cable-protection partnerships, capability sharing, information exchange, joint patrols, or agreed procedures for incidents at sea. It binds only its signatories. State plainly what each party will do, by when, at whose cost, and what happens on non-performance — aspirational memoranda are worth very little; verifiable ones can change the direction of committee.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between: [Party A] and [Party B] (and [Party C])
Subject: [Short title] Date (in-committee): [DD Month YYYY]

RECITALS

Recognising [the shared problem or interest]; Noting [the legal or institutional background]; Resolving to [the purpose of this memorandum];

THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS

1. Scope. [What this covers and expressly does not cover.]
2. Commitments of [Party A]. [Specific, dated, costed obligations.]
3. Commitments of [Party B]. [Specific, dated, costed obligations.]
4. Verification and reporting. [How compliance is confirmed, and to whom.]
5. Duration, review and withdrawal. [Term, review points, notice period.]
6. Status. Politically binding upon its signatories; creates no obligation for any non-party.

SIGNED:

[Name, title, delegation]

[Name, title, delegation]

4. Notes on Use

- Directives may be submitted at any time, including during moderated caucus; press releases and memoranda ordinarily during unmoderated caucus.
- Every document must be legible, dated and signed; unsigned documents will not be actioned. Directives take effect when the Executive Board acknowledges them, not when submitted, and consequences may be immediate, delayed or entirely different from what was intended.

M.C.T.M MUN 2026



- The Council may still adopt a resolution or a presidential statement, and crisis documentation must not displace that work. A committee that generates fifty directives and no agreed text has failed at the thing the Security Council exists to do.

Bibliography

A starting list, not a reading list. Prefer primary sources — treaty texts, national strategies, Council meeting records and CLCS submissions — over commentary.

1. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982) — un.org/depts/los
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4. US Department of Defense, 2024 Arctic Strategy — defense.gov
5. UK House of Commons Library, “President Trump and Greenland: frequently asked questions” — commonslibrary.parliament.uk
6. CSIS, “The Ice Curtain: Russia’s Arctic Military Presence” and “Russia’s Latest Nuclear Saber-Rattling” — csis.org
7. Nuclear Threat Initiative and Arms Control Association, New START coverage — nti.org; armscontrol.org
8. USGS, Circum-Arctic Resource Appraisal (2008) — pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2008/3049/