

# A Brief Analysis on Non-Arctic Nations Participating in Arctic Governance

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**Abstract:** Non-Arctic States are appealed to those changes of Arctic regions in recent years, while opportunities that these countries can participate in Arctic governance are provided due to the “expansion” of the Arctic Council. There are many commonplaces in the affairs of the participation of non-Arctic countries, including strengthening Arctic scientific research, intensifying diplomatic relations with Arctic nations, and broadening channels for Arctic participation, etc. Presently, as it is regarded as significant contents of China’s participation of global governance, China has played an important role in Arctic governance. While keeping a watchful on Arctic trends of other non-arctic states, China should acquire experience from them, learn from their strength, continuously improve participation strategy, and deepen the participation process, in order to make contributions to realizing good governance at the North Pole and benefit all mankind.

**Keywords:** Non-Arctic States; Arctic Governance; Arctic Council; Cooperation between Countries.

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## 1. Introduction

With the aggravation of global warming, the Arctic has become the focus of international community, and Arctic governance has been significant agenda of international community. Whether Arctic affairs can be resolved properly not only concerns the stability of Arctic regions, but also has close connection with the stability and development of the whole world. On account of decentralization of governance, the Arctic Council increasingly undertakes the primary responsibilities of handling problems of Arctic environment and sustainable development, and has the tendency to expand Arctic waterways and resources. Therefore, the Arctic Council naturally has become the best platform which engages in Arctic affairs and safeguards Arctic interests. The council is comprised of eight Arctic nations, including Russia, Canada, the United States, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Finland, and it is open to other sovereign countries and international organizations, allowing them to be observers of the council. As the most paramount regional arrangements<sup>[1]</sup>, the application of observers of the Arctic Council has been the only way for extraterritorial nations to enter into the Arctic Club.

At present, the Arctic Council embraces totally 13 observer countries, including 8 European countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Italy and Switzerland) and 5 Asian countries (Japan, South Korea, China, India and Singapore). Apart from China and India, the rest of them are developed countries. The status which these nations engage in Arctic governance is primarily displayed in the following three aspects:

Firstly, strengthen the Arctic scientific research. Investigation and research in Arctic is the primary method to participate in Arctic governance. The British government claimed Arctic science investigation straightly is conducive to enhance the knowledge of the Arctic, and it is the foundation of Arctic cooperation with other international actors<sup>[2]</sup>. Japan roundly launched the Arctic research around 1990 and implemented investigation subjects, which has made advanced efforts to take advantage of Arctic waterways. Moreover, South Korean also energetically facilitate commercialized operation of Arctic routes, such as improving laws regarding Polar research and activities, providing privileges for ships in Arctic routes, and cultivate talents acquainted with these routes and so on.

Secondly, reinforce diplomatic cooperation with Arctic nations. For a non-Arctic state, it is an effective approach to engage in Arctic governance. The Britain stated in the Arctic policies that they would always support and respect Arctic nations’ sovereignty in the Arctic, which earned prevailing good favors from Arctic states. In March, 2013, the Britain reached a consensus with Norway and Iceland successively on the reinforcement of bilateral relations, which involved the exploitation and collaboration in the North Polar Regions. After Christian Democrats regained the power at the end of 2012, Japan began to make efforts to Arctic diplomacy. In the same time, “Arctic ambassador” was established in its Foreign Ministry, which specialized in Japan’s diplomatic affairs<sup>[3]</sup>. South Korean in September, 2012, then-President Lee Myung-bak visited Russia, Greenland and Norway to have a conference and cooperation regarding Arctic environment preservation, climate change, opening of waterways, and resource exploitation, etc. South Korean also gave particular priority to collaborate with Russia. In February, 2014, Russia and South Korea made a further discussion on opportunities and approaches of developing Arctic collaboration, and represented that Arctic regions were promising and momentous collaboration fields for both parties<sup>[4]</sup>. Indian Arctic diplomacy also targeted to Russia, and they always were willing to participate in Russia’s development of Arctic areas. In October, 2013, Russia and India reached a consensus on consolidating the

cooperation of energy, military and so on, including exploitation of oil and gas resources in Arctic. Without wasting Indian diplomatic efforts, in March, 2014, Russia's petroleum company took initiative collaborate with India to implement Arctic continental shelves energy projects.

Last , expand channels for Arctic participation. While consolidating collaboration with Arctic eight countries, these countries are energetically exploiting more expensive channels for Arctic participation within the framework of international law and international organizations. From the perspective of international organizations, apart from those organizations specially involving Arctic governance, among members of the Council of the International Maritime Organization in 2014-2015, Italy, Japan, South Korea and the Britain were elected as A Class member, and France, Germany, India, Netherlands and Spain were elected as B Class member<sup>[5]</sup>. Therefore, the Britain and Germany all declare that they will venerate and acknowledge the interests of Arctic aborigines and their rights of self-management and self-decision. There are other nations initiatively create participation opportunities.

What's more,it should be mentioned that the systematic characteristics of Arctic affairs are overlapping, and Arctic governance includes regional governance and global governance. The white paper 'China's Arctic policy' issued on January 26, 2018, proclaims the basic principles of "respect, cooperation, win-win and sustainability" that China adheres to in the process of Arctic governance, adheres to science first, pays attention to environmental protection, advocates rational utilization, emphasizes international cooperation, and is committed to maintaining stable order in the Arctic<sup>[6]</sup>.The pathway of China's engaging in Arctic affairs is a progressive and complicated process. China should keep a close watch on relevant situations, and learn their advantages to make it continuously mature and sophisticated based on having an understanding of all circumstances. China is supposed to regard mutual respect as principle, take beneficial collaboration as means, and treat peace, coordination and sustainable exploitation and utilization as missions, in order to make significant contributions to realizing good governance in Arctic and benefit all mankind<sup>[7]</sup>

Since September 2013, the policy 'one beltone road', has been put forward by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in the light of the trend of the world. The idea of cooperation in the maritime Silk Road has mentioned the "blue economic channel connecting the Arctic Ocean to Europe". This "ice silk road" originated from Russia's invitation to China, and it is suggested that China participate in some projects of infrastructure construction of the northern waterway. On this basis, China can first participate in the freight railway project of opening up the ports of the northern waterway. China's cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union was carried out jointly to carry out the development and utilization of Arctic channel.<sup>[8]</sup>

In general, the participation of non-Arctic countries in Arctic governance needs to be implemented from multiple aspects. State responsibility should be reflected at the global level. In global organizations such as the United Nations, environmental governance and climate change in the Arctic should be addressed Ecological protection makes its own contribution and opposes any development at the cost of damaging the environment.

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