

# Point: The United States Should Adopt More Aggressive Policies in the Arctic Region

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## Thesis

A more aggressive Arctic policy would benefit the United States politically and economically.

## Talking Points

- A stronger US presence would ensure control over strategic resources and shipping lanes as the Arctic becomes more accessible due to melting ice.
- Aggressive policies could enable the US to capitalize on untapped natural resources, such as oil, gas, and rare earth minerals, boosting economic growth and energy independence.
- A more aggressive US stance is essential to maintaining geopolitical balance and preventing dominance by nations such as Russia and China.

## Summary

In light of the melting of sea ice taking place throughout the Arctic, some individuals and organizations argue that the United States must take a more aggressive approach to Arctic policy to ensure control over newly accessible resources and shipping lanes in the region. A 2023 report published by the law firm Bradley summarized the reasoning behind that approach, noting that according to scientific projections, “by 2035, parts of the Arctic will be free of ice during summer months, opening up prospects for commercial shipping to ply these waters and shorten transit time between the U.S., Europe and Asia.” Potential routes through the region include the Trans-Arctic Route through international waters that, as of the 2020s, were “only navigable by nuclear icebreakers.” As sea ice continued to melt, the report claimed, shipping lanes such as the Trans-Arctic Route would become more accessible, as would other passages through the Arctic. In light of such projections, some argue that the United States must increase its presence in the region to ensure future use of such routes.

Supporters of a more aggressive approach also argue that aggressive policies could enable the US to capitalize on untapped natural resources in the Arctic and boost the nation’s economic growth and energy independence. Writing for *The Federalist* in 2025, Chuck Devore made that argument in regard to Greenland, expressing his support for President Donald Trump’s stated desire to purchase Greenland from Denmark. “Greenland,” he noted, “possesses some of the world’s largest untapped deposits of rare earth elements,” which, he explained, “are essential for modern defense systems, semiconductors, electric vehicles, and artificial intelligence-driven computing.” As of the mid-2020s, China held a “near

monopoly” over the rare earth element market, but, as Devore asserted, “Greenland offers an alternative” due to its large deposits of valuable minerals. Devore concluded that direct access to Greenland’s resources could reduce China’s economic dominance and “build a resilient, domestic supply chain.”

For some supporters of an aggressive approach to US Arctic policy, that approach is particularly needed to maintain geopolitical balance in the Arctic and prevent nations such as Russia and China from exerting undue influence in that region. In a 2025 article published on the website of West Point’s Modern War Institute, Sylvia Jordan and Antonio Salinas expressed that perspective, stating that the Arctic is “tak[ing] on new strategic importance” for the United States due, in part, to “Russia’s militarization of Arctic territories and China’s growing Arctic ambitions.” In light of such factors, which they asserted “demand our urgent attention,” the United States must “accept the reality of ice melt by honing a comprehensive and aggressive Arctic strategy.” Jordan and Salinas went on to state that the United States is “already lagging years behind [its] competitors in this arena”; as such, they concluded, “we have not a moment to waste.”

## Ponder This

- The author has presented the fundamental positions for this perspective in the debate. Outline the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective.
- If asked to begin forming an argument for this position, what sources would you need to build your case? What fundamental information do you need? What opinion leaders in this debate would you look to in solidifying your argument?
- What are the weakest aspects of the position outlined by the author? How might those weaker arguments help you prepare a counter argument?
- What additional Talking Points could you add to support this position?

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## Bibliography

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