



PMUNC

2015

North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
(NATO)

Chair: Jason Choe

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## Chair's Letter

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to another year of PMUNC! My name is Jason Choe, and I will be your chair for the NATO committee. I am currently in my junior year here, majoring in economics and obtaining certificates (what most other universities call minors) in finance, political economy, and environmental studies. I got involved with the PMUNC conference last year when I served as one of the Under-Secretary Generals, but I've always loved chairing and interacting with delegates in person over handling background logistics. Outside of MUN, I also edit the newspaper, handle the finances of a science journal, work as a research assistant for a couple of professors, and (try to) cook tasty food as a member of a co-op on campus. Feel free to inquire about campus life if you're interested!

In regards to the committee at hand, you are presented with two opportunities. On the one hand, we have the Arctic, a traditionally ignored yet vitally important component of our biosphere. This region lies on the cusp of radical change; different forces seek to militarize it or economically develop it (or, in some cases, economically develop it through the often-unwarranted expansion of military influence), and NATO has the power and obligation to ensure that long-term safety in the region is established for posterity. On the other hand, a few thousand miles away, the world is still reeling from the (ongoing) repercussions of the Ukraine crisis of 2014. Ukraine's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been an on-and-off consideration since 2008, but, following more recent events, it would behoove us to reconsider a potential extension of membership to this beleaguered country. In both topics, any action or endeavor will require extensive debate to identify the benefits, as well as the potential effects, that such collective NATO action will or may have.

I look forward to meeting you all soon, and I hope you find this experience rewarding and engaging!

Best,  
Jason Choe

## Topic A: Militarization and Economic Development of the Arctic

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Though generally disregarded when compared in importance to other continents, the Arctic is seeing renewed interest as a bastion of natural resources, and different forces (on the national and international level) are coalescing their powers (or seeking to extend their influence in case of a lack thereof) in the region.

### On the geophysical and geopolitical dynamics of Arctic engagement

“The Arctic” is usually referred to in passing to generalize a region that lies somewhere about the current magnetic North Pole. From a geographic perspective, the Arctic for the rest of this topic shall encompass the North Pole and the immediately surrounding Arctic Ocean as well as partial regions of the USA (via Alaska), Canada, Finland, Denmark, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden.

Notably, of the officially identified Arctic-bounding countries listed above, all but two are members of NATO (since Greenland is a member through Denmark, only Russia and Sweden are not member states). This international demarcation of the Arctic is further complicated by the fact that existing statutes (like the UN Law of the Sea Convention), as well as disagreements over exact borders, render the exact delineation of “the Arctic” from a geopolitical standpoint (as opposed to a geophysical perspective) rather more complex.



### **History of Arctic Activity**

The history of Arctic exploration is long and storied, stretching all the way back to the exploits of the Ancient Greek sailor Pytheas in the year 325 BCE. Through subsequent periods, including the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery, the Scientific Revolution, and up until the modern day, the Arctic has remained one of the least understood surface regions of our globe, to which scientists flock. Real advancements began to flourish after 1909, however, when Robert Peary claimed to become the first person to reach the North Pole (albeit in an unconfirmed journey).

Through the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>, newer technological advancements enabled ever-greater forays into the arctic territories.

### **Economic Opportunities in the Arctic**

Among the most prominent of discoveries was the realization that the Arctic could be a veritable mother lode of natural resources for energy

extraction, particularly in regards to oil and natural gas. By some estimates, there may be as much as 30 billion barrels of oil and 220 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. For comparison, in 2013, the annual world oil consumption totaled about 33 million barrels of oil in all. On top of nonrenewable resources, the Arctic could also provide plentiful renewable energy, particularly in the forms of wind, tidal, and geothermal energies. Specific atmospheric pressure patterns (like the Aleutian Low or the Siberian High, each in turn driven by solar heat) can drive largely-predictable wind patterns, while a combination of lunar magnetic influence and irregular thermal heating of water (again driven by the sun) can produce waves. Furthermore, by virtue of the unique geography of the region, geothermal power is a potentially vast reservoir of energy.

Outside of the energy sector, the Arctic is also an important route for shipping trajectories, as well as a valuable source of wild fish populations. Moreover, the region holds a large quantity of minerals including iron ore, copper, nickel, phosphate, and gold, which can be accessed by both

conventional mining techniques (via land drilling) and less conventional methods (like offshore extraction). Lastly, the Arctic is a burgeoning tourist attraction, a possibility that may be precluded if international stability is not secured in the region.

### **Recent Events**

A slew of national and international research efforts in the Arctic over the past decades have begun to taper off. This withdrawal is largely attributable to the Western sanctions on Russia following the events in Crimea of Ukraine.

As Western nations ceased to provide supplies for joint Arctic endeavors, however, Russian involvement in the region has only grown. In particular, state-owned energy enterprises – like the oil giant Rosneft and the natural gas behemoth Gazprom – have actually been ramping up their forays following the dearth of Western involvement. They purport to seek only opportunities for future energy sector growth, but many find it troubling that the companies are in dire financial straits (one of them has recently petitioned the

Russian administration for a 50 billion dollar bailout), casting doubt on the veracity and integrity of their statements.

It has also been postulated, not without reason, that an expansion of economic interests in any hitherto unclaimed region (like the arctic) logically necessitates military assistance to enforce and protect such interests. It is then equally concerning that the Russian government has taken two particular steps.

Firstly, Sergei Donskoi, the minister of natural resources and the environment, announced that Moscow would petition the United Nations in the spring to extend its Arctic boundaries further north. In total, the requested territorial expansion totals some 1.2 million square kilometers and encompasses roughly five billion additional barrels of oil.

The Russian administration has, in roughly the same time, announced its plans to expand its military presence in the far north with the creation of a fifth military command (on top of the existing four branches currently in existence). Though it is not officially supposed to manifest until 2017 or later, the mere possibility still poses concerns for the

(albeit pending) militarization of the area. In the interim, Russian forces have begun conducting exercises in the area as such until the planned new force comes into effect.

### **Possibilities to Consider**

Although the plan for Russian mobilization of armed forces does not constitute in and of itself a declaration of war, nor does it necessarily portend or preclude the possibility of armed violence in the area, it does suggest that the NATO members should at least take the issue into consideration and plan for contingencies.

In this instance, delegates should consider the many facets of the problem. For one, should NATO respond to military action (should it arise) with equal action? And, if so, how might such a task force be organized, and of whom would it be composed?

On the other hand, how might the NATO member states take action to ensure a peaceable solution conducive to all involved parties and beneficial to every nation? If economic development of the area were to occur, how might the rights to natural resources be allocated,

and how much of the natural resources should be sustainably (or not) parceled out? Moreover, what types of economic development should be pursued – long-term infrastructural, or short-term resource extraction? And how might different goals be achieved?

More broadly, what should NATO envision as its long term goals for the development of the Arctic? Should development (either of a military or of an economic nature) even occur and be encouraged in the first place?

### **Positions**

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the Western bloc (many countries of which are also members of NATO) consider Russia's military ventures into the arctic to be disturbing at best, and threatening at worst. However, given the Western sanctions against Russia (following the Crimean crisis in Ukraine), much of the Western involvement in the Arctic has been effectively halted or withdrawn. Western nations must thus consider if and how to approach the issue without necessarily renegeing on their agreed-upon sanctions of the Arctic territories.

It is a fitting requisite that the member states of NATO are, for the most part, economically developed, post-industrial societies with the technological capacities to explore (and ostensibly militarize or develop) the Arctic. However, for less economically inclined states (which also conveniently are the ones most geographically displaced from the north pole and its surrounding environs), the issue of the matter is less about how to respond than about how to become more involved and vested in the issue at all. Exploration of new regions, many claim, should be a task undertaken by the entirety of humankind, so holistic inclusion of all interested parties may be another consideration to factor in.

For Russia, a major player in the issue, the desire to expand borders and to obtain greater energy potential may simply be just an attempt at boosting its domestic economy. While it is understandable that such expansion would benefit from military protection to cement the hegemony of Moscow over the area, the conscientious proposal to expand Russian militarization so close to the borders of a large cohort of NATO states does appear to be a politically bold

move. The question remains, however, of how the NATO states will respond.

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## Topic B: Conferring an extension of NATO membership to Ukraine

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After the recent events that began in October of 2014 involving Russian aggressions in the Crimean region of Ukraine, it would appear prudent seriously to reconsider the possibility of allowing Ukraine to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a full-fledged member, with all the rights and responsibilities such membership would entail.

### Background

As stipulated by Article 10 of the NATO charter, a new member can only be inducted into the organization upon unanimous approval by all existing members. Currently, there are 28 members of NATO; below is a list of the states as well as the years that they officially joined. Of the 28 current members, the 12 from 1949 (including Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the

United Kingdom, and the United States) are the founders of the group.

Albania  
2009

Belgium  
1949

Bulgaria  
2004

Canada  
1949

Croatia  
2009

Czech Republic  
1999

Denmark (and, through Denmark, Greenland)  
1949

Estonia  
2004

France  
1949

Germany  
1955

Greece  
1952

Hungary  
1999

Iceland  
1949

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Italy  
1949

Latvia  
2004

Lithuania  
2004

Luxembourg  
1949

Netherlands  
1949

Norway  
1949

Poland  
1999

Portugal  
1949

Romania  
2004

Slovakia  
2004

Slovenia  
2004

Spain  
1982

Turkey  
1952

United Kingdom  
1949

United States  
1949

It is worth noting that, besides unanimous approval, a prospective member willing to join NATO must also satisfy two criteria. Firstly, the nation must be a European country willing to abide by and uphold the principles of the Washington treaty; they must also fulfill political, economic, and military goals that make the country a suitable candidate, one that can both contribute and benefit from inclusion in NATO. In addition, approval by existing members can be conditional – which is to say that the approval can come attached with contingencies and strings (within reason) that the would-be member must be willing to fulfill.

There have been no further extensions of membership since 2009. However, Ukraine has had a complicated history of considering and petitioning for membership on-and-off since 1994.

In 1994, Ukraine became the first Commonwealth of Independent states (CIS) country to enter NATO's Partnership for Peace program, and, throughout the next decade, Ukraine would often cooperate on joint

endeavors with NATO efforts in the region.

In 2008, Ukraine first applied for NATO membership via the Membership Action Plan (MAP), but, following the 2010 electoral cycle, the newly empowered government (under then-president Victor Yanukovych) opted to exclude "integration into Euro-Atlantic security and NATO membership" from the country's national security strategy. By withdrawing Ukraine's application to NATO, the administration hoped to preserve its political non-alignment. The decision benefited from the fact that, at the time, over 40 percent of the Ukrainian population (a plurality) saw NATO as a threat, while 33 percent were ambivalent and another 17 percent saw NATO as a force for protection.

With the Euromaidan unrest in early 2014, Yanukovych fled the country, leaving the government in the hands of an interim government steered by Arseniy Yatsenyuk, which initially sought to preserve the precedent of non-alignment.

However, following Russian military incursions into Crimea (which

began in October of 2014) and new parliamentary elections in the same month, the government reversed its position, reneged on its non-aligned status, and renewed its appeal to join NATO. Notably, post-2014, a majority of the Ukrainian citizenry saw NATO as a force for protection, a significant change since just half a decade earlier.

### **The Crimean Crisis in Ukraine**

Following the events of the Euromaidan, during which then-president Yanukovych was ousted by protestors following his decision to suspend his government's plans to finalize an association agreement with the European Union, turmoil spread across much of the country. In particular, unrest built up in the Russophone-dominated eastern and southern regions of the country that had supported Yanukovych before his forcible removal from power. In the early months of 2014, they interfered with the decisions of the Ukrainian parliament, whom they said increasingly did not represent them, and one of Crimea's major cities – Sevastopol – illegally elected a Russian citizen as mayor.

Moreover, the protestors began to demand a referendum that would allow them to rejoin Russian jurisdiction. Since the fall of the USSR, Ukraine had maintained a policy whereby Crimea kept its “sovereignty” under Ukrainian governance, but the referendum would essentially require Ukraine to abdicate any political claims over Crimea.

During the same time frame, Russian military forces seized the Supreme Council (Crimean parliament), and a new, decidedly pro-Russian Prime Minister ascended to the position. What many claim to be a dubiously legitimate administration held a referendum, and, as of March 16, found that Crimea was to rejoin the Russian Federation. On March 18, a treaty was signed at the Kremlin officially to initiate Russia’s annexation of Crimea (although Putin disputes the use of the phrase, preferring to call it a “free expression of their [the citizens of Crimea] will...”).

Amid expanded Russian military presence in Crimea (reportedly for the purpose of “ensuring the conditions for the people of Crimea to be able to freely

express their will”), NATO also took steps to expand its military presence in Eastern Europe.

However, by March 18, Crimea and Russia formally met in the Kremlin (without the blessings of the Ukrainian administration) to finalize the annexation. By March 19, Ukrainian forces were ousted from their military bases in the region, and Ukraine formally withdrew its forces. Ultimately, though, many in Ukraine still feel that Crimea was forcibly conquered by Russia.

### **Other Considerations**

It is also worth observing that Russia, though not a member state of NATO, is actually a participant in the NATO-led Partnership for Peace endeavor. Established in 1994 to allow non-member states to cooperate and jointly operate with NATO in limited capacities, Russia’s involvement may prove to be a sticky point for Ukraine’s potential addition.

From the perspective of Ukraine only, NATO delegates must decide

whether it would be prudent to invite it to join or not.

The main questions would essentially boil down to whether Ukraine is deemed to possess sufficient economic development, political stability, and military clout not only to benefit from inclusion in NATO, but also to contribute to NATO's activities around the Atlantic and around the world.

The question is particularly prudent now that the cease fire, penned roughly half a year ago (in March), seems to be failing; another nine deaths occurred in Eastern Ukraine in May of 2015 as a result of renewed fighting and an upsurge of violence in the region. Many, including high-level officials in the Ukrainian government (including President Petro Poroshenko), have expressed both an eagerness to join NATO and a somber understanding that Ukraine does not, as of yet, possess the modern military armaments nor the economic stability that serve as prerequisites for induction. Nonetheless, it would behoove the committee to give serious consideration to how NATO can best serve the citizens of the region to

maintain security and provide support for eventual stabilization, whether by allowing Ukraine to (perhaps prematurely) join NATO or by providing third-party logistic support, military aid, and infrastructural capacity.

One final perspective to consider would be that of Russia, and some analysts believe that a Ukrainian membership in NATO will only stoke Russian aggressions even further.

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