Militarization of the Arctic:

The Arctic region is one of the most highly disputed areas in the twentieth-first century. As the forces of global warming continue to melt the polar ice caps and uncover lucrative natural resources, Arctic militarization is becoming an increasingly salient issue. Under present international law, no single country monopolizes the Arctic region. Instead, the international treaty that regulates Arctic territorial claims, the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, mandates that each of the five major Arctic countries, the United States, Canada, Russia, Norway, and Denmark, possesses an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles adjacent to its Arctic coast. Yet, the United States and seventeen other nations have refused to sign the Convention, which they view as a threat to their national economic and security interests. Meanwhile, world powers are clamoring to defend and even extend their territorial claims in the region.

This issue not only poses a threat not only to regional and global security, but also to northern indigenous communities, sustainable development, and environmental stewardship. The rapidly transforming Arctic geography is directly impacting an area of over 30 million km², engendering new issues, including territorial rights, potential trade routes, and environmental protection. Cooperation with the Arctic indigenous
populations is critical to preserving biodiversity and human health, as well as environmental health and global peace.

Confronted with these pressing geopolitical issues and a trend of militarization in the Arctic, the United Nations must address the question of a growing military presence in the Arctic. Should Arctic sovereignty rights continue to be defined by the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea? Should countries be allowed to maintain a military presence in the Arctic? What types of measures should be implemented to regulate activity in the region? How should Arctic security and environmental health be protected? The committee should aim to address these issues, whether through a multilateral framework for long-term Arctic policy, or through other innovative measures.

*topic from previous model UN found online*