

The Changes of United States Foreign Policy in The Arctic in 2022

Nofra Sella

Department of International Relations, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author

Email: nofrasella12@gmail.com

Abstract

The United States' (U.S.) attention to the Arctic region has intensified in recent years due to the opening of vast natural resources and the potential for new shipping routes resulting from global warming. As an Arctic nation, the U.S. has actively focused on the region. From its initial Arctic policy in 1971 until 2021, U.S. foreign policy remained relatively passive, merely outlining the general U.S. position in the region. However, in 2022, without significant changes or upheavals in the Arctic region, the U.S. significantly altered its foreign policy by incorporating military instruments To explore that factors that influenced the change in U.S. policy in the Arctic in 2022, this study employs the decision-making process theory. Utilizing qualitative research methods, the study relies on both primary and secondary data, drawn from official U.S. policies, supplemented by credible articles, news, and scholarly writings. The research identifies three factors that led to the U.S. altering its foreign policy in the Arctic in 2022: domestic political conditions, economic and military factors, and the international context.

Keywords: *The United States (U.S.); Arctic; Foreign Policy; Decision Making Process; Militarism.*

INTRODUCTION

The formulation of foreign policy stands as a crucial aspect of a nation's strategy to achieve its interests. In foreign policy, encompassing ideas and actions aimed at maintaining and altering conditions in a country's external environment, considerations are based on both internal needs and interests (Holsti, 1967). Consequently, the dynamics of the external environment and domestic conditions become pivotal factors influencing a nation's foreign policy formulation. Undeniably, these reasons serve as drivers for a country to modify its foreign policy.

The dynamics and changes in foreign policy, particularly for major powers, remain an intriguing and relevant topic. In this context, a compelling issue to explore is the shift in the United States' foreign policy concerning the Arctic region. The U.S. has increasingly focused on the Arctic in recent years due to the opening potential of natural resources, technology, transportation, climate change, and legal matters, particularly territorial claims (Raikov, 2022). Responding to these changes, the U.S. has shown interest in the Arctic through its foreign policy, albeit with a somewhat passive approach. This is evident in several foreign policies, such as National Security Decision Memorandum 144 in 1971 (National Security Council, 1971), later updated to Presidential Decision Directive 26 (PDD 26) in 1994 (The White House, 1994) US Arctic Policy in 2001 (U.S. Department of State, 2001) National Security Presidential Directive 66 in 2009 (NSPD 66) (The White House, 2009) and the National Strategy For The Arctic Region in 2013 (The White House, 2013). These policies broadly outline America's stance in the Arctic, emphasizing position, cooperation, environmental protection, and general security. Overall, the U.S. attention and policies appear to be rather general, lacking a sense of significant urgency in the Arctic region.

In 2022, the United States introduced its latest Arctic policy, marking a significant shift characterized by an increased military presence and utilization of military instruments. This

change is outlined in the National Strategy For The Arctic Region, driven partly by heightened Russian activities in the Arctic and their aggression towards Ukraine (The White House, 2022) However, the rationale behind this policy shift appears somewhat peculiar. Despite Russia's military activities in the Arctic dating back to the Cold War era, with increased activities since 2007 (Zysk, 2018) there was no corresponding policy change by the U.S. Even before Russia's aggression against Ukraine, historical records indicate Russia's involvement in the 2008 war with Georgia (Vendil Pallin & Westerlund, 2009) the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Treisman, 2016) and military intervention in Syria (Bishara, 2015) Surprisingly, there was no policy change by the U.S. in the Arctic region in response to these conflicts, let alone deploying troops and initiating military exercises.

The actions taken by the U.S. are warrant further examination. The increasingly aggressive shift in U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic, including military involvement, appears less justifiable because of Russia's long history of activities and aggression in the region. Therefore, this research aims to identify the factors driving the U.S. to alter its foreign policy in the Arctic in 2022. The primary research question is, "Why did the U.S. change its foreign policy in the Arctic in 2022?"

As a step towards addressing the research question and identifying gaps to strengthen this study, observations were conducted on previous academic studies. Academic studies discussing United States foreign policy in the Arctic are relatively scarce, given the historical lack of focus and attention on this region. This scarcity has implications for the limited availability of relevant literature regarding the development of U.S. policy issues in the Arctic. Most writings focus on the general development of Arctic issues due to global warming, and policy development occurs but not from the perspective of the U.S., resulting in a shortage of relevant writings on the development of U.S. policy issues in the Arctic. Nevertheless, some writings contribute to the research on the development of U.S. policy in the Arctic.

Overall, previous studies examining this phenomenon can be broadly categorized into two. Both studies act as drivers for changes in U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic but are divided into two focuses. The first category primarily explores the internal factors influencing U.S. policy changes in the Arctic, encompassing domestic upheavals in the U.S., ranging from leadership factors (Katherine, 2019; Lamy, 2016; Nilsson, 2018) to domestic politics and regional dynamics, as well as national government (Bouffard & Rodman, 2021; May et al., 2005; Väättänen, 2019) In the second category, external issues take center stage in driving U.S. foreign policy, such as environmental and rights-based issues. External factors are influenced and brought forth by external actors from the U.S., especially Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) focusing on environmental issues (Huebert, 2017; Moran & Farrell, 2011; Pegna, 2013; Roncero, 2016)

Based on the findings of previous authors, it can be concluded that several topics are under debate regarding the development of changes in U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic. First, the dynamics of domestic factors in the U.S. are discussed, including the influence of individuals, leaders, interest groups, and domestic government upheavals in the U.S. Second, external factors are highlighted, where changes in the Arctic environment impact U.S. national interests in non-traditional issues due to Arctic region changes driven by climate change, energy, and human security concerns. Additionally, the growing attention of external actors, especially NGOs focusing on environmental issues, in the Arctic further influences changes in U.S. foreign policy.

Preliminary findings from this literature review suggest that there is no research addressing external conflicts in the Arctic, which also contribute to the reasons for the aggressive shift in U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic. Furthermore, there is a lack of discussion on policy changes, particularly the increase and aggressiveness of the U.S. military in the Arctic in the U.S. foreign policy in 2022. Investigating the changes in U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic is crucial to

understanding the influencing factors behind these shifts, particularly the heightened military aspect in U.S. policy in the Arctic in 2022. Therefore, using the theoretical framework of foreign policy, specifically the decision-making theory, this study aims to map out the factors influencing the changes in U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic in 2022.

To address the research question, this study will employ one model from foreign policy theory, the decision-making theory. The analysis of foreign policy has long been present among scholars and historians; this theory emerged as thinkers sought to understand why leaders of a country make decisions regarding international relations (V. M. Hudson & Day, n.d.) In responding to this phenomenon, Richard Snyder, a foundational figure in the early development of foreign policy, explains that decision-makers act as representatives of the political society, thus being involved in formulating foreign policy. This means that the dynamics of both internal and external factors are interconnected, influencing decision-makers in foreign policy decision-making. Foreign policy can be considered a product resulting from a country, where the decision-making process involves both external and internal factors with the goal of serving the national interests of the country (Snyder, 1954)

Furthermore, the evolution of the definition of foreign policy elaborated by Modelski (1962) describes it as an official external activity carried out by independent actors (in this context, the state). This perspective also highlights that foreign policy contains pre-planned decisions ultimately aimed at implementation. Another perspective by Rosenau (1976) asserts that foreign policy is a collection of orientations, actions, and commitments reflecting a nation's behavior and attitudes.

As the issues in international relations evolve, existing foreign policies have yet to elucidate the emergence of foreign policy, particularly the interconnected process of external and internal factors ultimately resulting in a policy. This challenge is underscored by Snyder, who articulates, "Hitherto, precise ways of relating domestic factors have not been adequately developed(Snyder, 1954). In response to this challenge, a theory known as the decision-making theory has emerged. Coplin (Coplin & Marbun, 2003) asserts that when analyzing a country's foreign policy, one must examine the role of leaders in policy formulation, as it would be erroneous to claim that leaders make policies without due consideration. Coplin further explicates in his decision-making theory that three considerations influence a country's foreign policy formulation: domestic politics, economic and military conditions, and the international context (Coplin & Marbun, 2003).

The first factor considered in this theory is domestic politics or the domestic conditions of a country. Domestic politics is a crucial factor influencing foreign policy decision-making (Coplin & Marbun, 2003). It is a consideration for the leaders of a country, especially in designing international agendas. Domestic politics is even regarded as an inseparable realm of international relations. The situation and conditions within a country shape behavior and determine a country's foreign policy. The domestic conditions referred to include ideologies adhered to, the economic and political situation at the time, and the type of government system adopted by a country, all serving as influential domestic factors in determining a country's foreign policy.

The second factor pertains to economic and military conditions. The economic and military capabilities of a country significantly influence the outcomes of its foreign policy decision-making. This occurs because the economic and military conditions of a country can also serve as an indicator of its domestic situation. Nevertheless, Coplin acknowledges that both economic and military capabilities play a role in the foreign policy decision-making process (Coplin & Marbun, 2003), regardless of the longstanding debate on which holds greater importance.

The third factor is the international context, based on how international conditions serve as a factor influencing a country's foreign policy activities. This is evident in how the international situation becomes a factor shaping a country's behavior. The international situation is related to the issues faced by a country and the positions taken by other countries, prompting the formulation of foreign policy. According to Coplin (Coplin & Marbun, 2003), three crucial elements in this international context variable are geographical, economic, and political aspects. The political aspect emphasizes how a country endeavors to pursue its interests and political dominance.

This concept was previously applied to the same topic research regarding changes in United States foreign policy but with a different case study, namely "Kebijakan Luar Negeri Amerika Serikat: Perjanjian Damai dengan Taliban Tahun 2020" (Masta, 2022). With a different case, this paper will attempt to explain and analyze using a similar concept. This study will analyze these three factors to elucidate the factors contributing to the changes in U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic in 2022.

This article is organized into three parts: the first part includes an introduction providing background, objectives, and a literature review on the development of changes in U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic. It outlines the analytical framework used in this research, namely the decision-making process theory by Coplin, and explains the research methodology. The second part comprises the analysis, while the third part concludes why changes occurred in U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic in 2022.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method employed in this study qualitative research. This method relies on non-numeric data collection strategies or techniques that use words (Lamont, 2015) A deductive approach is also applied in this research, where the investigation of the problem refers to the theoretical framework with the aim of elucidating the variables within the decision-making process theory by Coplin. The data collection technique for this study involves desk research or literature review, utilizing both primary and secondary data. Primary data is sourced from official U.S. government documents regarding Arctic policy, as well as official statements and speeches from the U.S. government.. In addition to using primary data, this research will also incorporate secondary data from previous studies found in journal articles, book chapters, websites, and reports from news sources covering related issues. The collected data will be processed using triangulation techniques to enhance the validity and reliability of the existing data findings, aiming to minimize potential biases from data sources. The gathered data will be analyzed by comparing the current conditions with the ideal conditions referencing the factor in Coplin's decision-making process theory.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In conducting the discussion analysis, this paper draws insights from the theory and factors of Coplin's decision-making theory previously explained. It posits that a state's actions manifested in foreign policy are influenced by three factors: domestic political conditions, economic and military conditions, and the international context.

Domestic Political Conditions

The issuance of the new U.S. policy in the Arctic coincided with the leadership of President Joe Biden. Examining the domestic political conditions in the U.S. during Biden's

tenure reveals the opinions of domestic figures regarding Biden's actions in the Arctic. Domestic figures had expressed their views on Biden's Arctic actions even during the election process. Senator Alaska, Lisa Murkowski, stated that Biden's actions in the Arctic would likely continue the initiatives of the two previous two-term presidents, particularly Obama, driven by the crucial issue of climate change (Bykova, 2020)

Considering the components of Biden's campaign promises, the opinions of these domestic figures hold weight, as Biden pledged to close Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), an environmentally detrimental drilling program from Trump's administration (Glueck & Friedman, 2020). Furthermore, Biden plans to impose a ban on Arctic offshore drilling. Biden places climate change at the forefront of the Arctic Council, supported by his commitment through the Biden Plan for a Clean Energy Revolution & Environmental Justice, allocating \$2 trillion to address climate change issues (Glueck & Friedman, 2020).

Continuing from the perspectives of domestic experts, these opinions and domestic actions persisted when Biden officially assumed the U.S. presidency. This is evident through the Biden Administration's proactive stance on Arctic issues. John Kerry, the U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, affirmed the significant impact of current climate change on the Arctic. He highlighted the potential opening of new shipping routes, resource exploration, and increased military presence (Gramer, 2017). This statement was corroborated by Sherri Goodman, a senior figure at the Wilson Center's Environmental Change and Security Program and the Polar Institute, emphasizing that the U.S.'s most prominent interests in the Arctic revolve around climate change and the environment (House.gov, 2021). Hence, there is a crucial need for more intensive and up-to-date policies and strategies in the Arctic for the U.S.

Aligned with these arguments, the domestic political reason for this policy is demonstrated by how the Biden administration perceives this issue. This is exemplified by the Biden administration promptly sending the U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, to visit and participate in the Arctic Council's 2021 meeting in Iceland (U.S. Department of State, 2022) Through this forum, Blinken emphasized the importance of a peaceful focus and cooperation among Arctic nations in responding to current developments in the Arctic region. This action serves as an initial indication of the Biden government's serious consideration of the Arctic's importance for the U.S., addressing both environmental and security issues, as mentioned earlier.

This study also assesses that the issuance and reinforcement of U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic are triggered by Biden's disagreement with Russia's militarization in the Arctic. According to Mark Nevitt, an associate professor at the Syracuse University College of Law, Biden explicitly criticized Russia's militarization in the Arctic and expressed intentions to respond to Russia's actions (Bykova, 2020) This is substantiated under the Biden administration, as a response to Russia's military actions and infrastructure development in the Arctic. The U.S. under Biden's leadership invested in enhanced surveillance efforts in the Arctic to monitor threats and activities, supported regular Arctic military training and exercises, and planned to expand the Coast Guard icebreaker fleet and support deep-draft ports in Nome (U.S. Department of Energy, 2022) These domestic actors' initiatives, along with Biden's stance, became supporting factors for the issuance and strengthening of the latest U.S. Arctic policy in October 2022.

Economic and Military Conditions

The Arctic region is gaining economic significance due to its vast natural resources, strategic location, and potential transportation routes as the ice melts. The United States has a significant presence in the North Pole, considering its position within the Arctic region. U.S. economic activities in the Arctic mainly revolve around oil and gas exploration, fishing, and shipping. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), the Arctic holds 13% (90 million barrels) of conventional oil and 30% of conventional gas resources (EIA, 2012) . In

addition to the potential natural resources, the melting of ice in the Arctic Ocean increases activities in the region. It is predicted that the melting ice could open the Northwest Passage (NWP) and the Northeast Passage (NEP), reducing trade routes between Asia and Europe, as well as Asia and North America, by up to 40% (EIA, 2012). Moreover, Alaska, a part of the U.S., is rich in oil and gas reserves (EIA, 2021).

Apart from oil and gas exploration, the U.S. is a key player in the Arctic fishing industry. Alaska is home to some of the world's largest fisheries, particularly for salmon (Welch, 2022), and the U.S. is a major exporter of seafood to other countries. As the Arctic ice continues to melt, new shipping routes open, presenting new economic opportunities for the U.S. The Northern Sea Route, along the northern coast of Russia, is becoming more accessible, and the U.S. is exploring ways to leverage this new transportation route.

Overall, while the United States has a significant presence in the Arctic region, its economic activities in the area are currently somewhat limited. However, given the undeniable reality of global warming and the continued opening of the Arctic region, economic factors will be a significant driver for the U.S. to further engage in the Arctic, particularly in oil and gas exploration, fishing, and shipping routes.

Military Perspective

From a military perspective, the Arctic region holds significant importance for the U.S. military, and the changing environmental conditions in the Arctic pose considerable challenges to U.S. military capabilities. Data indicates that Alaska, as part of the U.S. Arctic region, serves as a strategically positioned hub for the placement of the U.S. Air Force's best aircraft, facilitating quick responses to crises in the Indo-Pacific region (Garamone, 2022). Additionally, the region is a key refueling stop for U.S. Air Force aircraft (Garamone, 2022). From a military standpoint, the Arctic is a crucial node in the U.S. defense system. Therefore, changes in the Arctic have direct implications for U.S. military operations and defense capabilities.

According to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Arctic and Global Resilience, Ferguson, environmental changes in the Arctic have dramatic effects on U.S. military operations and infrastructure, the attribute of military infrastructure being built on ice foundations vulnerable to environmental changes (Garamone, 2022). Consequently, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) has established a new office to prioritize service capabilities in the region, deepen partnerships with allies and partners, and enhance Arctic education across departments through Arctic oversight.

Beyond military infrastructure, these changes increase the activities of rival nations, particularly Russia, whose military buildup in the Arctic presents new challenges to U.S. defense and military capabilities. Recognizing these challenges, the U.S. emphasizes the importance of responding with new actions and measures. In response, the U.S. demonstrated its capabilities by forming the 11th Airborne Division, specializing in military mobility operations in the extreme Arctic weather. These operations, conducted in temperatures below -15 degrees Celsius, require new techniques, tactics, and procedures for U.S. military forces (Garamone, 2022).

In response to these challenges, the U.S. showcased defense facilities for missile defense, radar, and early warning systems against military threats from other entities in the Arctic. In March 2022, the U.S. deployed its military strength in the Arctic, displaying Air Force B-52 bombers, F-22 fighters, KC-135 tanker aircraft, and the E-3 Sentry airborne warning and control system over the southern coast of Alaska (A. Hudson, 2022). This action was intended to send a strategic message to potential adversaries that U.S. military capabilities are capable of being projected anytime, anywhere, and are ready and able to defend the homeland.

These developments underscore the critical importance of the Arctic region for U.S. military defense and highlight the advancements made by the U.S. military, spanning technology to troop capabilities. Thus, the identified military capability factor serves as a rationale for the

U.S. strengthening its commitment to bolster policies and become more active in the Arctic region.

International Context

Based on the external variables previously outlined by Coplin, three indicators in the international context include geographic, economic, and political factors. This study identifies the driving factors behind this policy, stemming from the geographic proximity of the Arctic region to America and political considerations concerning the political situation of other entities in the Arctic that motivate the U.S. to strengthen its policy. Meanwhile, concerning economic factors, the study observes limitations in the economic context significantly influencing the reason for the recent U.S. policy in the Arctic.



Figure 1.1 Arctic Region Map

Source: <http://www.athropolis.com/map3.htm> (Athropolis, n.d.)

The geographical proximity itself plays a crucial role in influencing the United States, as changes in the Arctic region directly impact the U.S., especially in the region of Alaska, as illustrated in Figure 1.1 above. Alaska officially became part of America in 1867 following the purchase of the territory from the Russian Empire (U.S. Department of State, 2001) Therefore, any changes in the Arctic region have implications for the U.S.

Furthermore, the close geographical proximity of other Arctic nations, such as Russia, which is only 55 miles away, adds to the rationale for the U.S. to reinforce its policy in the Arctic, given the geographical indications of sovereignty, as illustrated in Figure 1.2. Russia's actions, particularly military activities and the close positioning of Russian military bases geographically near the U.S., contribute to the geographic threat perceived by the U.S. Hence, the geographical factor serves as a rational basis for the U.S. to strengthen its policies in the Arctic, considering the geographical location that indicates territorial sovereignty—an essential interest for every nation, including the U.S. Even in cases where other nations do not share direct borders, the U.S. reinforces its policies if its interests are implicated, especially when territorial sovereignty directly aligns with U.S. interests.



Figure 1.2 Location of Russian Military Bases in the Arctic Region

Source : <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/25/heres-what-russias-military-build-up-in-the-arctic-looks-like-trump-oil-military-high-north-infographic-map/> (Gramer, 2017)

Political Factors

From a political factor, the shift in U.S. foreign policy is attributed to the interest of the U.S. in maintaining its status as a hegemonic nation in every region, especially regions directly bordering the U.S. This is due to the growing influence of other nations, such as Russia and China, often debated as rising powers, becoming increasingly dominant in the Arctic region (Kuo, 2023). As explained in the preceding variables regarding Russia's escalating activities in the Arctic, it is noteworthy that China officially released a specific policy or white paper on China's Arctic Policy in 2018 (English.gov.cn, 2018). This policy emerged as China acknowledged and declared itself a near-Arctic state—not a region within the Arctic but issuing policies for the Arctic to strengthen its influence across regions.

China's growing presence is not limited to policies; it strengthens by forming partnerships with many Arctic nations. Cooperation with Russia expands into collaborative projects on transportation and domestic trade (Chinanews, 2018). Furthermore, collaborations extend to energy projects, such as the signing of a cooperation agreement for the Patakha oil and gas project located in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, in 2019 (Sasac.gov.cn, 2019). China also engages in partnerships with several Arctic nations, including collaboration on a monitoring and research center with Finland in Sodankyla, Northern Finland, in 2018, as part of the realization of the digital silk road. Subsequent collaborations include a Science Observatory partnership with Iceland in 2018 to monitor the environment and climate changes in the Arctic (Radi.cas.cn, 2018). Additionally, cooperation with Greenland involves mineral resources and infrastructure (Sørensen, 2018)

Considering the increasing and strengthening activities of both nations, the reluctance of the U.S. as a hegemonic nation to allow its rivals (Russia and China) to become dominant in the Arctic region becomes more rational. As per Mearsheimer's explanation of regional hegemony, a hegemonic nation ensures that no other hegemon is present in a system (Mearsheimer, 2003) This is because such a presence could threaten the U.S.'s position and disrupt the balance in that specific region. Hence, to prevent this scenario, the U.S., as an opposing force to these two nations, demonstrates its strength and reinforces its Arctic policies to maintain dominance in various regions, including the Arctic.

CONCLUSION

The shift in U.S. foreign policy in the Arctic in 2022 is influenced by three factors: domestic political conditions in the U.S., U.S. economic and military conditions, and, lastly, influenced by the international context, especially geographical and political factors.

In terms of domestic political conditions, the U.S. received significant reason to pay more attention to the Arctic region due to the substantial impact of changes in the Arctic on environmental and security issues. This reason came from U.S. scientists focusing on Arctic changes, accompanied by political figures. Moreover, the domestic political factor driving the change in U.S. policy in the Arctic also came from U.S. President Joe Biden, aligning with Biden's focus on environmental and security issues in the Arctic. This is also in line with and an implementation of campaign promises made by Biden earlier.

Economically, the Arctic's potential natural resources, including natural gas, oil, and new shipping routes, present economic opportunities that cannot be ignored by the U.S. Additionally, Alaska, a part of the U.S. within the Arctic, is a major contributor to the fishing industry and the largest reserve of fish for the U.S. and the world, further strengthening the economic rationale for the U.S. regarding the Arctic.

From a military perspective, the Arctic is a strategic position for U.S. military bases to reach the Asia-Pacific region. Environmental changes in the Arctic necessitate U.S. military forces to adapt to extreme weather conditions, coupled with external threats, especially from Russia, prompting the U.S. to strengthen, enhance, and demonstrate its military presence. The changes in the Arctic region increasingly highlight the U.S.'s military interests and advancements, ranging from personnel to military equipment capabilities.

In the international context, especially in geographical and political aspects, also plays a role in this shift in U.S. foreign policy. Geographically, the proximity of the U.S. to the Arctic region reinforces the reasons for the change in U.S. policy. Alaska's direct proximity to the Arctic influences the region's development, addressing environmental issues due to global warming. The geographical proximity is further evident by the close position of U.S. territory to numerous Russian military bases in the Arctic, less than 55 miles away. Therefore, geographical location significantly influences this shift in U.S. policy.

Furthermore, in the international political context, the increasing presence of U.S. rivals, Russia and China, in the Arctic, spanning military and economic activities, threatens the U.S.'s hegemonic position in the region. This threat serves as a contributing factor prompting the U.S. to strengthen its policies in the Arctic.

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