

Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress



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CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. Paperback. Book Condition: New. This item is printed on demand. Paperback. 66 pages. Dimensions: 11.0in. x 8.5in. x 0.1in. The diminishment of Arctic sea ice has led to increased human activities in the Arctic, and has heightened concerns about the regions future. The United States, by virtue of Alaska, is an Arctic country and has substantial interests in the region. On January 12, 2009, the George W. Bush Administration released a presidential directive, called National Security Presidential Directive 66 Homeland Security Presidential Directive 25 (NSPD 66HSPD 25), establishing a new U. S. policy for the Arctic region. Record low extent of Arctic sea ice in 2007 focused scientific and policy attention on its linkage to global climate change, and to the implications of projected ice-free seasons in the Arctic within decades. The Arctic has been projected by several scientists to be perennially ice-free in the late summer by the late 2030s. The five Arctic coastal states the United States, Canada, Russia, Norway, and Denmark (of which Greenland is a territory) are in the process of preparing Arctic territorial claims for submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. The Russian claim to the enormous underwater Lomonosov Ridge, if accepted, would reportedly grant Russia nearly one half of the Arctic area. There are also four other unresolved Arctic territorial disputes. The diminishment of Arctic ice could lead in the coming years to increased commercial shipping on two trans-Arctic sea routes. Current international guidelines for ships operating in Arctic waters are being updated, with a targeted completion date of 2010. Changes to the Arctic brought about by warming temperatures will likely allow more exploration for oil, gas, and minerals. Warming that causes permafrost to melt could pose challenges to onshore exploration activities. Increased oil and gas exploration and tourism...



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