

SPECIAL COMMITTEE: TEDIC
Topic A: Settling the Antarctic Land Disputes

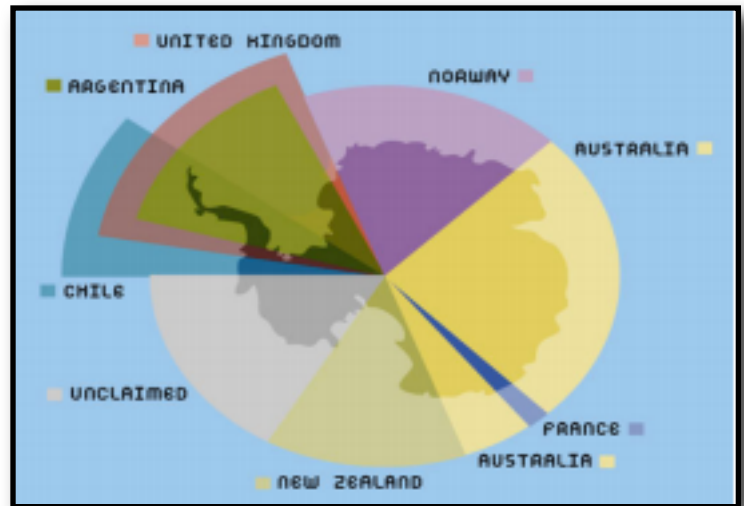
Chair: Giulia Molinari
Vice-Chair: Marcia Lagesse
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Background Information

Currently, there are many parties claiming territories of the South Pole including Australia, France, Norway, the UK, Argentina, Chile, and New Zealand with the US and Russia reserving rights to make claims without having formalizing it yet. Many other parties do



not actually recognize most of these claims and are still highly interested in the region due to the myriad valuable natural resources available on the continent.

Antarctica is undeniably important to scientific research and abundant in natural resources. At the moment, the countries cited above claim around 3/4 of the continent's total area with some of their claims overlapping. Such countries are a part of the Antarctic Treaty but most of the members of the treaty do not actually recognize their claims. The Antarctic Treaty was signed in Washington on 1 December 1959 by countries whose scientists had been active in and around Antarctica during the International Geophysical Year (1957-58). It entered into force in 1961 and has since been acceded to by many other nations.

The first country to make official claims over the Antarctic territory was the Great Britain in 1908; However, a Norwegian explorer reached Antarctica and the South Pole before Great Britain and placed down a Norwegian flag in order to claim the territory as

theirs. This was just one of the many expeditions made by many countries, which are the basis for these countries' Antarctic territorial claims.

In the first decade of the 20th Century, three countries - United Kingdom, Argentina and Chile - claimed a part of the region called the Antarctic Peninsula to be rightfully theirs for sovereignty, but these territories claims overlap, creating tense conflict between such nations.

In 1958, the United Nations declared it as the International Geophysical Year, which included the territorial dispute in Antarctica on its agenda, taking in consideration that scientists from 12 different nations were already working together in the Antarctic. It resulted in a worldwide momentum which called for an extreme action. This resulted in a worldwide momentum that called for an extreme action, which was to demilitarization

the Antarctic. This was done by signing a treaty – the Antarctic Treaty.

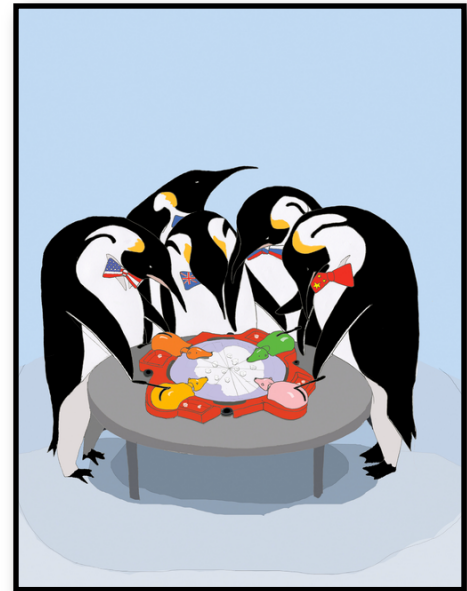


Furthermore, the Antarctic treaty originally consisted of twelve signatories but since then, the number has grown to around fifty.

The main commitment that this treaty demands from the signatories is guaranteeing Antarctica's future peaceful usage, aiming to benefit all humanity. In addition, the conservation of the parties' efforts toward the avoidance of strife. Nevertheless, this

treaty does not recognize any territorial claim made by any country in the past, present or future.

The Antarctic treaty effectively demilitarizes the Antarctic continent, and made it possible for science to flourish, by resolving problems mainly on a geological and environmental level. However, the treaty did not prevent tensions escalating between the claimant countries, especially those with overlapping territorial



claims. For example, war almost broke out between Chile and Argentina, in 1978, over the Beagle Island, which they used to base their Antarctic territorial claims on. Failing to find a proper diplomatic solution will most likely lead to bitter relationships which would unfortunately, in the negative scenarios, end up exploding the use of military means in order to achieve the countries' ambitions, or leading a disinvestment in the scientific prospects of the area.

Antarctic Treaty Membership

Date of Membership	Member Nations
23 June 1961	Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, United States
14 June 1962	Czechoslovakia
20 May 1965	Denmark
30 March 1967	The Netherlands
15 September 1971	Romania
19 November 1974	East Germany
16 May 1975	Brazil
11 September 1978	Bulgaria
5 February 1979	West Germany
11 January 1980	Uruguay

16 March 1981	Papua New Guinea
18 March 1981	Italy
10 April 1981	Peru
31 March 1982	Spain
8 June 1983	China
19 August 1983	India
27 January 1984	Hungary
24 April 1984	Sweden
15 May 1984	Finland
16 August 1984	Cuba
28 November 1986	South Korea
8 January 1987	Greece
21 January 1987	North Korea
25 August 1987	Austria
15 September 1987	Ecuador
4 May 1988	Canada
31 January 1989	Colombia
15 November 1990	Switzerland
31 July 1991	Guatemala
28 October 1992	Ukraine
25 January 1996	Turkey
1 January 1993	Czech Republic, Slovakia
24 May 1999	Venezuela
17 May 2001	Estonia
27 December 2006	Belarus
30 May 2008	Monaco
29 January 2010	Portugal
31 October 2011	Malaysia
1 March 2012	Pakistan

Timeline

1819: First sighting of the Antarctic Peninsula and South Shetland Islands by British Capt. William Smith.

1820: Palmer Land discovered by American Capt. Nathaniel Palmer.

1831: First sighting of the Antarctic continent in the Indian Ocean sector by British Capt. John Biscoe, in the Tula and Lively.

1839: First landing south of the Antarctic Circle by British Capt. John Balleny in the Eliza Scott discovered and landed on the Balleny Islands.

1841: First ever to enter the Ross Sea by British explorer Sir James Clark Ross in the ship Erebus.

1853: First landing on Greater Antarctica (Victoria Land) by American Capt. Mercator Cooper in the Levant.

1901: Otto Nordenskjold led the Swedish Antarctic Expedition, one of the first expeditions to explore parts of Antarctica. They landed on the Antarctic Peninsula around February of 1902, aboard the *Antarctica* which later sank not far from the peninsula with all crew saved. An Argentinian ship later rescued them.

1903: First permanent scientific station established in the Antarctic, at Laurie Island, South Orkneys by the Scottish National Antarctic expedition under William Speirs Bruce.

1904: Argentina began to occupy Antarctic lands when purchasing the meteorological station belonging to the Scottish Dr. Bruce, on Laurie Island, South Orkney islands.

1911: Norwegian explorer reaches Antarctica and the South Pole and place down a Norwegian flag.

1929: U.S. explorer Richard Byrd made the first flight over the South Pole from Little America Base.

1941: German commandos board and capture two Norwegian factory ships in the sea north of Queen Maud Land. By the end of the next day, the Germans had taken possession of three factory ships and eleven catchers. The German Navy subsequently used the waters of the Peninsula and the sub-Antarctic islands as a haven from which they could venture forth to attack allied shipping. Their main base was an obscure harbor on Kergulen Island.

1943: British dispatch naval missions to Antarctica (Operation Tabarin), which established the first permanent British scientific bases.

1956: First permanent station at South Pole built (Amundsen – Scott South Pole Station).

1957: International Geophysical Year, scientists of 67 nations research the environment.

1959: The Antarctic Treaty signed in Washington DC. Originally, the treaty consisted of 12 signatories but since then, the number has grown to around 50. The treaty states that Antarctica will remain peaceful and demilitarized and shall be free to be used for scientific purposes. Also, while the treaty is in force, no claims to the territory will be supported and/or denied.

1978: Argentina sent an expecting mother to Antarctica and her child became the first baby born on the continent (a Norwegian girl had been born in the polar region in 1913 but it was not actually on land).

1978: Argentina and Chile have had territorial disputes in the past but they began having arguments over the control of some islands in the south region of their borders. The two countries also are the most insistent upon their claims to the continent.

1987 – 1991: World Park Base a non-governmental year-round base located at Cape Evans on Ross Island in the Ross Dependency established by Greenpeace.

Key Terms

Antarctica: A continent lying chiefly within the Antarctic Circle and asymmetrically centered on the South Pole. Some 95% of Antarctica is covered by an icecap averaging 1.6 km in thickness. The region was first explored in the early 1800s, and even though there are no permanent settlements, many countries have made territorial claims. The Antarctic Treaty of 1959, signed by 12 nations, prohibited military operations on the continent and provided for the interchange of scientific data.

Antarctic Treaty: The main treaty was opened for signature on December 1, 1959, and officially entered into force on June 23, 1961. The original signatories were the 12 countries active in Antarctica during the International Geophysical Year of 1957 – 53. The 12 countries had significant interests in Antarctica at the time: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These countries had established over 50 Antarctic stations for the IGY. The treaty was a diplomatic expression of the operational and scientific cooperation that had been achieved “on the ice”.

Beagle Dispute: A border dispute between Chile and Argentina over the possession of Picton Lennox and Nueva islands and the scope of the maritime jurisdiction associated with those islands that brought the countries to the precipice of war in 1978. The islands are strategically located off the south edge of Tierra del Fuego and at the east end of the Beagle Channel. The Beagle channel the Straits of Magellan and the Drake

Passage are the only three water ways between the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean in the southern hemisphere.

Demilitarization: The process of demilitarization or removal of military activity or control from an area, which happened in the Antarctic territory in order for countries to sign the Antarctic Treaty where no countries are allowed to have any military activity within the territory. Since 1959, all of the military control in the Antarctic was removed and since then, no country has militarized the Antarctic.

Overlap: To lie or extend over and cover part of; to have an area or range in common with. There are various overlaps in the territorial claim in the Antarctic (e.g. Argentina's territorial claim overlaps Britain's territorial claim)

Sovereignty: Supremacy of authority or rule as exercised by a sovereign or sovereign state. Self-government.

Territorial claim: A legal declaration of desired control over areas of property including bodies of water. The phrase is usually only used with respect to disputed or unresolved land claims. Seven states maintain a territorial claim on eight territories in Antarctica. These countries have tended to site their scientific observation and study facilities in Antarctica within their claimed territory.

Guiding Questions

- Which countries have staked territorial claims?
- What are some viable solutions for the overlapping claims?
- What are the reasons for each country's claims? Are some more valid than others? If so, which?
- How does the Antarctic Treaty operate?
- What are the objectives of the Antarctic Treaty?
- What problems are currently facing the enforcement of the treaty?

Further Research

Antarctic Treaty

http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/about_antarctica/geopolitical/treaty/update_1959.php

http://www.ats.aq/documents/ats/treaty_original.pdf

<http://www.nti.org/treaties-and-regimes/antarctic-treaty/>

http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/about_antarctica/geopolitical/treaty/faq.php

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsrYGvMr4Nc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4XKahn1hkU>

Territorial Dispute

https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/ibru/conferences/sos/karen_scott_paper.pdf

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/27068/Antarctica/24731/National-rivalries-and-claims>

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/dispute-threatens-antarctica-claim/2008/01/16/1200419882499.html>

<http://en.ria.ru/infographics/20071214/92461533.htm>

http://books.google.com.br/books?id=etNtoK1kqJYC&pg=PA89&lpg=PA89&dq=antarctica+dispute&source=bl&ots=HR1VMeFPpB&sig=9VhskDx_PEWZ6jGUMtac6Vgwgp4&hl=pt-

[BR&sa=X&ei=ZPIQVLDqDPWCsQTluYLYDA&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=antarctic%20dispute&f=false](http://books.google.com.br/books?id=etNtoK1kqJYC&pg=PA89&lpg=PA89&dq=antarctica+dispute&source=bl&ots=HR1VMeFPpB&sig=9VhskDx_PEWZ6jGUMtac6Vgwgp4&hl=BR&sa=X&ei=ZPIQVLDqDPWCsQTluYLYDA&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=antarctic%20dispute&f=false)

Sovereignty

<http://classroom.antarctica.gov.au/international/sovereignty-and-territorial-claims>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZngDjSKOUc4>