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Arctic: The New Strategic Frontier of the 21st Century

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Arctic: The New Strategic Frontier of the 21st Century

Once dismissed as a frozen wasteland, the Arctic is now the world's hottest strategic battleground. Melting ice is unlocking new sea lanes, faster Europe–Asia routes, and a treasure chest of hydrocarbons, rare earths, and fish stocks—turning the High North into a geopolitical "gold rush".

Russia now dominates the Arctic game: half the region's coastline, a fortified military presence, and a virtual monopoly on nuclear icebreakers that keep its Northern Sea Route open and under control.

The U.S. is scrambling not to fall behind, eyeing Greenland as the ultimate strategic outpost—a reality laid bare when Trump openly floated the idea of buying it.

China, calling itself a "near-Arctic state," is advancing its Polar Silk Road, quietly investing in infrastructure and resources to secure a long-term foothold in a region far from its shores.

But the real geopolitical earthquake came from Scandinavia. Finland and Sweden joining NATO has turned the Baltic into a NATO lake and forged a continuous Western security arc from North America to the Barents Sea. The Arctic, once a rare zone of scientific cooperation, is now edging toward becoming the next front line.