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Russia Claims Continental Shelf in Arctic Ocean

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Recent reports indicated that Russia is staging massive Arctic maneuvers. **Lev Fedoseyev / TASS**

Russia has claimed new slices of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean in two fresh submissions to the United Nations.

According to its March 31 submissions, Russia is seeking to define the outer limits of its continental shelf to include the Gakkel Ridge, the Lomonosov Ridge and the Canadian Basin.

The new claims overlap with those of Canada and Denmark, Canada's CBC broadcaster reported Sunday.

"Here's a situation where they're claiming the entire Canadian and Danish continental shelf as part of their continental shelf," the CBC quoted University of Calgary Arctic security and defense analyst Robert Huebert as saying.

"In effect, they're claiming the entire Arctic Ocean as their continental shelf in regards to where their Arctic comes up against Canada's and Denmark's," Huebert added.

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The three countries stake claims in the Arctic along with Norway and the United States.

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates the Arctic holds 13% of the world's undiscovered oil and 30% of its natural gas resources.

Though states are entitled to a continental shelf 200 nautical miles from their coast, their claims to areas beyond that must be backed by scientific data.

Russia's UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) submissions come nearly two years after a senior Russian official said the country had obtained the data needed to support its claims in the Arctic.

The CLCS rejected Russia's 2001 claims to the outer shelf. Russia handed in new claims including 1.2 million square kilometers of territory in 2015.

Canada's global affairs government department said it is studying Russia's revised claim to prepare an appropriate response, the CBC reported Sunday.

Global Affairs Canada said Russia's revised outer limit "does not establish new rights for Russia over the newly created overlap areas," it was quoted as saying.

Extending its claim is part of Russia's latest Arctic strategy, which looks to extend its Exclusive Economic Zone claim to the continental shelf. Observers say Denmark, Canada and Russia plan to come to an agreement as overlapping claimants on the terms of Arctic delineation by 2024.

Recent reports indicated that Russia is staging massive Arctic maneuvers and is amassing new military bases and testing advanced weapons on its Arctic coastline.

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