

Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Arctic: National security decisions and their environmental consequences

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Problem Statement: Climate change in the Arctic now gives rise to WMD-related issues rooted in history, militarization, and politics.

- WMD development, deployment, and disposal have significant impacts on the environment and human health.

- Nuclear weapons states (NWS) were the major superpowers in the Arctic. Today both NWS and non-NWS seek regional access for strategic advantage.

- The Arctic is at risk for environmental damage if states rush to secure interests in the region using traditional military means, including WMD.

- The U.S. is at a historic juncture where identifying the relevant questions of WMD implications of Arctic thawing are as important as finding WMD solutions.
- Will international law, devised in the Cold War for strategic deterrence: 1) keep pace with Arctic thaw? 2) prevent conflict between NWS and non-NWS who access the Arctic?

