

Outline of Japan's Arctic Policy

Background and Significance of Formulation of Japan's Arctic Policy

By demonstrating intent to contribute to dealing with various problems in the Arctic, Japan will secure its presence and play a leading role in international initiatives regarding the Arctic.

Background

- Melting of the Arctic Ocean sea ice due to global warming
 - ⇒ Environmental impact on a global scale such as global warming etc.
 - ⇒ Use of Arctic Sea Route, Possibility of energy resources
 - ⇒ Changing security environment
- Increasing international societies' interest in the Arctic
 - ⇒ Discussions have been increasingly active concerning the formulation of international rules at the Arctic Council (Members are the US, Russia, Canada and Scandinavian countries) and other forums.
 - ⇒ Non-Arctic states are also working actively. In 2013, Japan, China, India, Italy, South Korea and Singapore gained observer status of the Arctic Council. Countries including the UK, Germany, South Korea formulated and announced their own Arctic policies.

Arctic Ocean ice of 1980s



September 2012
(smallest in recorded history)

Significance

- By demonstrating intent to work on Arctic policy, Japan will declare its policy both at home and abroad to actively participate in international Arctic initiatives and contribute to Arctic issues as a main player.
 - ⇒ Japan will express its intent to parties concerned, including the US(the current Chair of the Arctic Council) in order to raise awareness toward Japan as an indispensable player at various venues such as the Arctic Circle *1 in October 16-18.
- By highlighting Japan's policy, which is based on its strength in science and technology including observation, research, and environmental initiatives, Japan will play a leading role in formulation of international rules and build close international and bilateral cooperative relationships.

*1 International conference of government officials, scientists and business representatives that organizes cross-disciplinary meetings and sessions on the Arctic. Last year participants included ministerial level person such as the Chancellor of Germany and the Foreign Secretary of the UK.

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- **April 2013: Japan's Cabinet adopted the Basic Plan on Ocean Policy**

Outlines the following as focus areas to be pursued strategically and comprehensively.

- 1) Observation of and research on the Arctic
- 2) International cooperation on the Arctic
- 3) Study of the feasibility of the Arctic Sea Route

- **May 2013: Japan gained observer status at the Arctic Council (AC).**

- **July 2013: "Liaison Conference of Relevant Ministries and Agencies for Arctic Issues" was established.***

A total of 10 meetings were held with such purposes as sharing information and drafting Japan's Arctic Policy.

(*The Liaison Conference consists of Cabinet Secretariat, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Ministry of the Environment, and Ministry of Defense)

Content of Japan's Arctic Policy

Basic Perspective

Japan will

- Make full use of Japan's strength in the area of science and technology from a global viewpoint
- Give full consideration of the Arctic environment, which is fragile, with a lower ability to recover
- Ensure the rule of law, and promote international cooperation in a peaceful and orderly manner
- Respect the right of indigenous peoples to continuity in their traditional economic and social foundations
- Pay full attention to security developments in the Arctic
- Aim for economic and social compatibility with climate and environmental changes
- Seek possible economic chances for the use of the Arctic Sea Route and for the development of resources

Specific Initiatives (1. Research and Development)

- **Promoting Arctic research to contribute to global policy decision-making and problem-solving**
 - Via ArCS*2 and other Arctic research projects, thoroughly strengthen international cooperation and collaboration with stakeholders in Arctic research.
- **Strengthening observation and analysis systems and develop the most advanced observation instruments**
 - Continue to work to strengthen observation, using advanced satellites, research stations and research vessels, and to develop observation instruments and other equipment that can withstand the harsh Arctic environment.
- **Establishment of a research network in Japan**
 - By establishing a network of multiple universities and other research organizations, promote interdisciplinary initiatives and the sharing of research infrastructure.
- **Establishment of research stations in Arctic states**
 - Jointly establish research stations in the US, Russia, and other Arctic states, and promote international cooperation in joint research and others.
- **Considering the design of a research vessel**

*2 Arctic Challenge for Sustainability Project (ArCS): A project to fundamentally strengthen the existing Arctic research framework. By strategically promoting new international joint research, the establishment of international joint research stations, and the development of young researchers, put science and technology to use in foreign policy, from the viewpoint of both use and preservation of Arctic regions, and enhance Japan's ability to speak in international forums.

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Specific Initiatives (2. International Cooperation)

- **Advocating scientific findings and contributing to formulation of international rules**
→ Actively communicate scientific findings toward solving global environmental issues due to changes in the Arctic environment, and participate actively in the formulation of international rules, such as "the Polar Code" at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and rules for management of fisheries resources.
- **Further contribution to activities of the AC**
- **Expansion of international and bilateral cooperation with Arctic and other countries**

Specific Initiatives (3. Sustainable Use)

- **Promoting preparation for utilization of the Arctic Sea Route**
→ Identify the natural, technical, systemic, and economic challenges of the Arctic Sea Route, and promote preparation of an environment for its utilization by Japanese shipping companies and others, such as the construction of a system to predict sea ice distribution and other systems to support maritime navigation.
- **Resources development (mineral and marine living resources)**
→ Continue financial support for Greenland Petroleum Exploration Co., Ltd via the Japan Oil, Gas, and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC).
→ Cooperate with other interested states, when exploring marine living resources, to consider the establishment of a conservation and management framework for achieving their sustainable use based on scientific evidences.