David and I negate Resolved: The United States should accede to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea without reservations.

**Our Sole Contention is a Big Hole in the North Pole**

Ryan from the University of Dayton writes in 2009 that the Law of the Sea Convention outlines that mineral resources beyond national jurisdiction, such as in the arctic, are managed by the International Seabed Authority, known as the ISA. The Pew Research Center explains in 2016 that in order to access these resources, ISA member states are eligible to apply for contracts, which govern all aspects of actual mining.

Absent membership, companies will never start the arctic adventure. Currently, prospective Arctic drilling companies resist buying US waters because the US cannot provide international legal certainty for those waters. This means that common business tactics like using subsidiaries or relocating to different countries still do not provide access to the US Arctic. This is because Gardner of the ASP reports in 2012 that companies have expressed their need for “the maximum level of international legal certainty before they will or could make the substantial investments” in Arctic exploration.  He concludes that “companies won’t drill in the Arctic until they are backed by the legal framework of UNCLOS.”

As time goes on, Arctic drilling will only become more profitable. Matyi of S&P writes in 2018 that most arctic companies can currently turn profit at $75 a barrel. However, Bennett of Foreign Policy Association writes in 2018 that because of automation and innovation in the oil industry, operation costs have been decreasing and the industry is on track to make Arctic oil profitable at $50 a barrel. They’re likely to hit this goal because Cant of Mckinsey Energy finds that production costs have fallen 29% since just 2014.

Overall, the only barrier that can hold these companies back is the legal backing. Ryan of the University of Dayton writes that if the United States ratified the Convention, it could expand its current claim and companies could drill almost 300,000 square miles of more land, which the Mineral Management Service finds in 2011 contains 88 billion barrels of oil and 398 trillion cubic feet of gas. US Ratification would signal the start of the drilling race, which is harmful for THREE reasons.

**First is Royalties.** Turner of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  writes in 2004 that under UNCLOS, coastal states must share profits from mining and drilling to the International Seabed Authority. After this money is pooled, it is redistributed to land locked countries that are said to need assistance. In fact, Groves of the Heritage Foundation quantifies that the ISA would take 92 billion dollars of US royalties. He writes that UNCLOS authorizes the Authority to distribute royalty funds to despotic regimes, corrupt nations, and even state sponsors of terrorism, as the payments are cash transfers without any direction.

**Second is Oil Spills**. Mead of Vice in 2014 writes as oil and shipping companies begin to invest in the Arctic, there isn't enough research examining how the Arctic is changing and how to respond to oil spills in such a unique environment. And there currently aren't enough resources in place for spill response, either. Oil spills in the arctic will be catastrophic. Hartsig of Ocean Conservancy writes in 2017 these oil spills would impact wildlife like polar bears, seals  and fish, as well as local indigenous communities, all of which rely heavily on food from a healthy ocean.

**Third is Climate Change.** Unfortunately, Walsh of Time Magazine finds in 2012 that Methane and black carbon, two potent greenhouses gases, will likely be emitted in significant amounts if drilling in the Arctic occurs. In fact, McKinnon of Greenpeace quantifies in 2015 that scenarios published about the impacts of Arctic oil exploration are all consistent with at least 5 degrees Celsius of global warming. Unfortunately, Aton of the Scientific American found in 2017 that the world can expect 3.1 to 7.4 percent less food yield per degree Celsius of warming, a level that would push billions into starvation. Not only this, but Matthews of Global Policy writes that Climate Change can exacerbate underlying tensions in areas of the world, as it strains countries of resources and money. For example, Chestney of the Scientific American writes in 2013 that the release of methane in the Arctic could cost the global economy over 60 trillion dollars, with the vast majority of the impact put on developing countries.