

A new international fisheries organization for the Arctic?

Written by Scott Parsons

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The Rideau Institute released this week at a conference on the Arctic a new report [Circumpolar Challenges: An Ambitious Agenda for the Arctic Council, by Michael Byers](#)

. One thing that caught my eyes was Byers' comments on the potential for expanded fisheries in the Arctic as the ice cover continues to melt.

In this report Byers recommends,

inter alia

, the establishment of a regional fisheries organization for the Arctic, as a precautionary measure in anticipation of intensified fishing there as the ice melt continues. This echoes a call by the Pew Environmental Group in 2012 for a new international fisheries agreement to protect the Central Arctic Ocean. Byers argues that it can sometimes be easier to find the political will to conclude a treaty before national interests and public opinion are fully engaged, e.g. before expanded fisheries are developed there. Whether the Arctic Council is the appropriate vehicle to pursue such an agreement is an open question since the EU which has jurisdiction over fisheries of some of the potential players is not a member of the Council. But obviously the suggestion deserves further consideration and it is in Canada's interest to advance such a discussion.

TAGS: sustainable, fisheries, fishing, Arctic, international fisheries organization, Michael Byers, Rideau Institute, Arctic Council