Tensions between EU-Norway

What is the issue?

\n\n

Recently, a Latvian ship was intercepted by Norwegian coast guards while crab fishing around Svalbard and received a hefty fine.

\n\n

What are the contrasting opinions?

\n\n

\n
- At the heart of the problem, it's about conflicting interpretations of **the 1920 Svalbard Treaty,** which was signed between Norway & the EU.
\n
- The core issue is to agree on the geographical scope of the treaty and how far all signatory states benefit from an equal access to resources.
\n
- The treaty recognizes Norway's 'full and absolute sovereignty'.
\n
- It also gives the signatory nations an equal right to economic activities on Svalbard and its territorial waters.
\n
- With a strict interpretation of the treaty, Norway says the agreement applies only to the 12-mile limits of the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard and not any further.
\n
- But, Belgium says it covers 200 miles around Svalbard, in line with the concept of an economic zone that did not exist when the treaty was signed.
\n

\n\n

What might be the real issue behind?

\n\n

\n
- On the face of it, it is a relentless battle in a remote part of the Arctic about snow crabs.

\n
- But, **what really at stake is oil** and a coming race for the commodity of which there is a lot in the polar region.
\n
- According to the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, a large amount of the 17.7 billion barrels could be located in southeastern Svalbard.
\n

\n\n

What is The Law of the Sea Convention?

\n\n

\n
- The Law of the Sea Convention, is the international agreement that defines the rights and responsibilities of nations in their use of the world's oceans, establishing guidelines for businesses, the environment, and the management of marine natural resources.
\n
- The convention set the limit of various areas, measured from a defined baseline. The areas are as follows.
\n
- **Internal waters:** Covers all water and waterways on the landward side of the baseline.
\n
- The coastal state is free to set laws, regulate use, and use any resource. Foreign vessels have no right of passage within internal waters.
\n
- **Territorial waters:** Out to 12 nautical miles from the baseline, the coastal state is free to set laws, regulate use, and use any resource.
\n
- Vessels were given the right of innocent passage through any territorial waters.
\n
- Nations can temporarily suspend innocent passage in specific areas of their territorial seas, if doing so is essential for its security.
\n
- **Contiguous zone:** It is 24 nautical miles from the territorial sea baseline in which a state could continue to enforce laws in four specific areas: pollution, taxation, customs, and immigration.
\n
- **Exclusive economic zones:** These extend 200 nautical miles from the baseline.
\n
- Within this area, the coastal nation has sole exploitation rights over all

natural resources.
\n
- Foreign nations have the freedom of navigation and overflight, subject to the regulation of the coastal states and they may also lay submarine pipes and cables.
\n

\n\n

\n