

Russia claims Arctic shelf and its riches

by UPI

MOSCOW -- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says Russia's Arctic expedition is aimed at proving ownership of a large area near the North Pole. Researchers in two mini-submarines dove 14,000 feet under the North Pole Thursday to take soil and plant samples from the seabed. The scientific effort is designed to prop up Russia's claim to about 460,000 square miles of the territory, which contains 25 percent of the world's oil and gas reserves, RIA Novosti said. Russia claims the Lomonosov Ridge, extending from the New Siberian Islands toward the Canadian Arctic Archipelago is a submerged geological extension of the Siberian platform, Itar-Tass said. International law says the five countries with territory inside the Arctic Circle -- Russia, the United States, Canada, Norway and Denmark -- can claim only a 200-mile economic zone around their coastlines, Novosti said.

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