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Sommario/riassunto	On 2 August 2007, a Russian submarine captured world headlines by making a dangerous journey to the bottom of the Arctic seabed and planting a metal, rust-free national flag more than 14,000 feet beneath the North Pole. The aim was to assert Russia's legal sovereignty over a region whose importance had only recently started to become apparent as its melting ice had made, or was expected to make, vast natural resources open to exploitation. The latest estimates are that the region holds around 13% of the world's undiscovered oil and as much as 30% of undiscovered natural gas reserves that would