

Lahn Model United Nations  
2011



# Preparation Guide

for the Security Council

Conflict of Resources  
in the Arctic Area

lahn  
model  
united  
nations



## **Special remarks on the Security Council**

Each one of you will represent one of the 15 delegations in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Permanent members are: the People's Republic of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. Non-permanent members for LahnMUN 2011 are: Angola, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Saudi-Arabia, Singapore and Venezuela. After understanding the topics of your agenda, and how the UNSC functions, we recommend you to be well informed about your state's position. Please be aware of the fact that the LahnMUN Rules of Procedure are obligatory for the sessions in the UNSC. Therefore please, always stay in diplomatic conduct, and respect other delegations in the same way you wish to be respected by them.

## **Special rules of the Security Council**

The right to veto decisions is one of the special rules applied in the UNSC and sets it apart from the other main bodies of the UN. The following rules, additional to the rules mentioned in the LahnMUN Rules of Procedure guide, will be applied in the UNSC:

### **1.1. Veto power**

The right to veto a decision is the privilege of the permanent members. The veto is automatically in force if a permanent member votes against a substantial decision. It is not necessary for a permanent member to announce the usage of the veto. However it is not possible to veto in procedural votes. Even if 14 states are in favour of a particular decision, one "no" vote from a permanent member of the UNSC is enough to fail the whole vote. You should use your veto wisely as it is quite easy not only to upset the non-permanent members of the Council by reminding them of their "second class membership", but also to damage relations with permanent member states and quite possibly re-erect the inefficacy of the Cold War.

### **1.2. Declare a vote substantial**

Another privilege of the permanent members is to declare a procedural motion substantial: Directly after a specific procedural motion, (for example, to suspend the meeting), has been brought in by a Delegate, a permanent member may move to declare it substantial. This motion passes without a vote or debate. If the committee then votes

upon the now substantial motion, (1) they may abstain if they are only present, (2) a member may declare a roll call vote on this motion, or (3) the permanent members may use their veto. As with normal motions, the chair will ask if there is any objection to declaring a motion substantial. If there is objection, there will be a vote to re-declare the now substantial motion into a procedural motion. But: This vote is a substantial vote with all outlined consequences, meaning that the permanent member who brought in the motion may use its veto and so prevent re-declaring it.

### **1.3. Minimum majority**

According to Article 27 of the UN Charter, the necessary minimum majority is always nine votes in favour, regardless of whether it concerns procedural or substantial matters. This differs from other committees, as it means that always at least 60 per cent of the Council have to vote in favour for a decision to pass – including the concurring votes of the permanent five in regard to substantial matters. In regard to procedural votes, which have not been declared substantial, the permanent five may also vote with “no” (this is not counted as a veto in procedural matters; see above), but still at least nine members of the UNSC have to vote in favour for a decision to pass.

### **1.4. Status of observers**

According to Article 31 and 32 of the UN Charter, states, which are currently not members of the UNSC, may participate in the debates of the Council as well. This is normally the case when (a) a state feels specially affected by the outcome of the current topic, or (b) the UNSC invites a state, which is party to a dispute currently under discussion. However, the observer state will not be granted the right to vote in the Council, and its presence has always to be approved by the Council. States can also be requested to appear before the UNSC to answer questions. After the questioning is finished the state leaves, unless its continued presence as an observer is approved by the Council.

# Conflict of Resources in the Arctic Area

by Markus Leonhardt

## Introduction

The Arctic Area is located on the northern part of the globe and includes the Arctic Ocean as well as parts of Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia and the United States of America. As one of the last widely undiscovered areas of the earth it includes huge amounts of natural resources that are going to be of great importance for all countries bordering the Arctic region. Not only does the Arctic contain a huge amount of natural resources, it also holds 20 % of the world's water supply. These facts make clear that the Arctic region plays an important role in the world's future supply of natural resources. Contrary to Antarctica the Arctic Area is not an ice-covered landmass but rather a deep sea area that is covered by ice.

When it comes to territorial questions it is important to know that no country owns the North Pole and the areas around it. There is a 200 nautical miles zone around the North Pole that limits national borders. The United Nations Convention of Law of the Seas postulates that a state has 10 years to make claims about the Arctic territory. Until now Norway, Russia, Canada and Denmark made claims that certain parts of the Arctic Area should belong to their territory. If these claims are declared valid the country will possess exclusive rights to the resources that lie beneath the Arctic Area. The United States has signed but not yet ratified the treaty, although former President George W. Bush asked the U.S. Senate to do so in 2007.



There are multiple reasons for dispute over the allocation of certain Arctic areas. Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the United States regard parts of the Arctic Area as 'national waters'. Furthermore there are disputes about what area is declared an international seaway, meaning that any nation can pass the Arctic at that point.

### **Territorial claims in the Arctic Area**

On August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 a Russian expedition named *Arktika 2007* planted a Russian flag beneath the North Pole claiming that this part belongs to Russian territory. The expedition was launched to prove that the Lomonosov-Ridge is an extension of Russian land territory. Although the expedition was scientific, the flag planting raised concerns whether **Russia** would be starting a race for the Arctic oil reserves. Russia claims an area of more than 460.000 square miles of the ice-covered Arctic. Critics say that the Russian claim of the territory is less about gaining territory, but is rather driven by the fact that Russia will then possess large hydrocarbon reserves (oil can be extracted from these hydrocarbons) that lie beneath these areas.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper made clear that **Canada** will protect the arctic territory claimed by Canada and ordered a total of eight patrol ships to the territory. Furthermore the Canadian government opened a new army training center in Resolute Bay and reopened the deep-water port in Nanisivik.

Contrary to the Russian government the Danish government argues that the Lomonosov-Ridge is in fact an extension of Greenland and therefore belongs to **Denmark**.

**Norway** made claims to extend its territory beyond the 200 mile zone. As well as the "Loop Hole" in the [Barents Sea](#), the Western Nansen Basin in the Arctic Ocean, Norway also claims the so called "Banana Hole" in the [Norwegian Sea](#).

Right after the Russian expedition the **United States** launched an expedition that mapped the seabed in the Arctic to find out which part of Alaska is extended into the 200 miles zone in the Arctic region. U.S. officials declared that the expedition had nothing to do with the Russian expedition and was planned long before.

## **Institutions of cooperation**

Cooperation of the eight Arctic states has a long history, especially between the Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Norway). Most of the Arctic policies of these nations are shaped and greatly influenced by presidents and governments and has not been constant. The only constant facts are that every country is concerned about losing sovereignty over their claimed territory, shipping routes and, of course, resources. In the following the Arctic Council will be introduced.

## **The Arctic Council**

The Arctic Council was officially set up by the Ottawa Declaration of 1996. It is a high level intergovernmental forum to provide means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states. Members are: Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States of America. Observer states are: France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. As well as national governments the Arctic council includes representatives from the indigenous people that live in the Arctic region. The indigenous people are mainly involved in discussions about environmental protection and sustainable development. In the past the Arctic council issued several studies on climate change and the oil and gas reserves beneath the arctic ice shelf.

## **Recent events**

During a scientific conference in the Russian capital of Moscow in September 2010 Russia repeated its claim for the Lomonosov-Ridge, arguing that it is an extension of Russia. At the beginning of the century in 2001 Russia officially claimed this area in accordance with the United Nations Convention of Law of the Seas (UNCLS). In fact, Russia was not the first country to launch an expedition to the Arctic Area/North Pole and to submit its claim for the Arctic territory. For instance, Denmark has carried out several expeditions to the floor of the Arctic sea and Norway has claimed that its arctic territory should be enlarged. Together with Norwegian and Russian ships Sweden carried out several expeditions as well. The motive that lies behind these efforts is clear: The countries want to have the legitimate access to the Arctic's natural resources. American scientists believe that the Arctic Area includes a total of 90 Billion barrels of crude oil as well as 50 Billion cubic meters of natural gas. These figures are reason enough, especially for the U.S. and Russia,

especially during a time where conflicts in the oil rich nations in the Arab world increase and the own fossil fuels are fading.

The conflict lies in the fact that Canada, Norway, Denmark and the U.S. claim areas that are overlapping with those claimed by the Russian government. One could therefore say that the conflict is between the Russian Federation and NATO. In the past years Russia has aggressively pursued its claim of the Arctic area. The Russian government announced that its army will train special "Arctic forces" to protect the claimed area. Some journalists are literally calling the tensions between Russia and the NATO states a "New Cold War". In 2008 the National Security Council of Russia passed the so called Russian Arctic Strategy that aims at establishing Russia as the greatest military force in the Arctic. Although the Kremlin wants to solve the resource conflict peacefully, it seems that the Russian military wants to be prepared – just in case. Aside from control of the Arctic resources Russia aims at controlling the seaway between Europe and Asia (once the ice capes have melted far enough). Russia will control an important direct trade-way between two economically strong continents.

On May 12, 2011 WikiLeaks published several diplomatic cables about the Arctic conflict. They show that the conflict is far more tense than expected. U.S. Officials say that they are concerned about the "potential of increased military threats in the Arctic". According to Greenpeace the documents also show that instead of fighting the melting of the Arctic ice capes the bordering countries invest in their military to be set up for the race for the Arctic resources that lie beneath the ice capes. Danish officials believe that the melting of the capes and the related opening of new seaways will place the Arctic region in the center of world politics. Russian foreign minister Lavrov said that Russia will not be defeated in the fight over the Arctic resources and tempted the Norwegian foreign minister to say as a reaction that Russia just gave Norway the best argument to defend the purchase of new fighter planes.

The cables also show that the United States is counting on Greenland. The United States think that through their support and cooperation with Greenland, they will become an exclusive partner of Greenland once the autonomous region is independent from Denmark.

## **Threats of the exploitations of the Arctic resources**

Adjacent to the threat of military intervention caused by dispute over certain areas the threat of a total meltdown of the ice capes is widely underestimated. Greenpeace argues that a melting of the Arctic capes will lift the sea level by a total of 7 meters. Furthermore the capes play the key role in the meteorological albedo effect. The albedo effect describes the reflection of the sun's light back into space and is important for the world climate. With the melting of the ice capes the Arctic would not reflect the light anymore and the climate would therefore rapidly warm up. Millions of people living in coastal areas would be affected by floods. Additionally, the melting of the capes destroys the habitat for many unique animals as well as for long existing tribes of indigenous people.

There are also many reasons that underline the fact that extraction of oil and gas in this area is extremely dangerous. There are only a few specialists in the world that know how to extract resources in an area like the Arctic (remember that the Arctic is no landmass but instead a melting ice shelf). The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico shows how risky deep sea drilling is. It can easily become a natural catastrophe that affects and changes the life of millions. The seabed of the Arctic is filled with methane gas bubbles that can "blow" when the borer hits them. "Blow" means that huge amounts of gas rapidly move towards the surface. The seabed on the contrary breaks loose and collapses. When reaching the surface the methane gas is absorbed by the atmosphere and increases global warming. News agency announced on May 17, 2011 that a planned cooperation between the British B.P. and the Russian *Rosneft* failed due to the opposition of BP daughter TNK-BP that is run by four Russian oligarchs.

## **Questions to consider**

- What interest does my country has in the Arctic?
- What external influences ( EU/NATO membership etc.) are there?
- How can the territory conflict be settled? What can the Security Council do?
- How can environmental issues be solved?
- Are there indigenous people whose rights have to be respected?

**Resources:**

Wikileaks: [http://www.wikileaks.ch/reldate/2011-05-12\\_0.html](http://www.wikileaks.ch/reldate/2011-05-12_0.html)

<http://www.spiegel.de/thema/arktis/>

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/news/Blogs/makingwaves/wikileaks-reveals-arctic-could-be-the-new-col/blog/34735>

United Nations: <http://www.un.org>

United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS): <http://unbisnet.un.org>

United Nations Security Council: <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc>