

Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee (GA1)

Issue: Preventing the militarization of the Baltic Sea

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INTRODUCTION

The Baltic Sea is the biggest semi-enclosed inland brackish sea, in other words, the biggest sea with a mixture of both river and seawater. It is a sea of the Atlantic Ocean and an arm of the North Atlantic Ocean. The Baltic Sea resembles a riverbed with its two tributaries being the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia. Nine countries surround the sea, namely Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Poland, and lastly Russia. Five more countries are located in the drainage basin but do not border the sea, namely Belarus, Czech Republic, Norway, Ukraine and Slovakia.

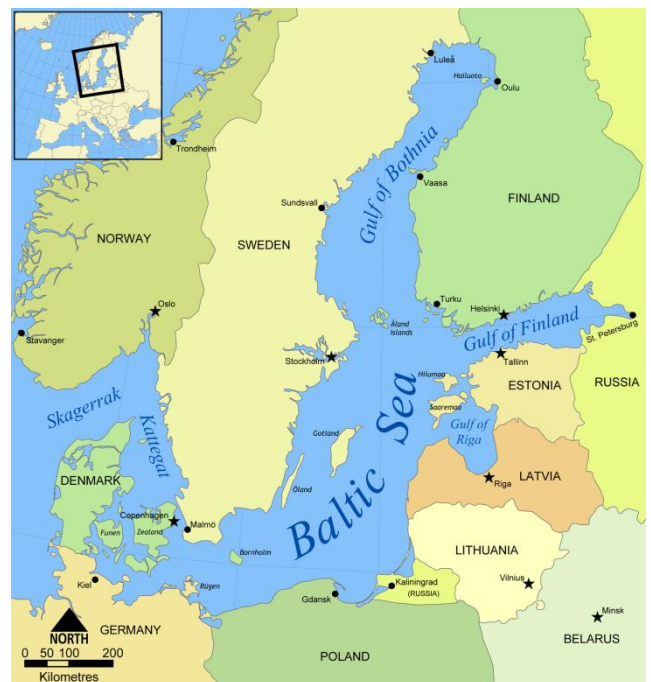


Figure 1: Map of the Baltic Sea and its surrounding countries

Over time, the Baltic Sea has become a significant matter of conflict on numerous occasions. Dating back to the Middle Ages, the domination of the Baltic Sea was a matter of desire for the neighboring nations, largely due to heavy commercial activity and the potential existence of oil reserves in the region. In the aftermath of Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and its use of military in Ukraine, the area has received new attention by the bordering countries and NATO. More specifically, the 2014 developments have placed the Baltic Sea at the forefront of the countries' and NATO's defense and security concerns, as

evident in a significant militarization of the area by the relevant parties. Indeed, the recent re-militarization of Sweden and Russia's rocket force test, along with the strained relations between Russia and the European Union (EU) countries make this issue both very relevant and crucial, aligning with the focus of GA1 on critical security, disarmament and world peace issues that beset contemporary world.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Militarization

Militarization can be defined as: "the act of sending armed forces to an area"¹. It refers to the act of giving military character to an event and the process of organizing a society for a military conflict or violence by equipping an area with military forces and defenses. The notion generates from the ideology of *militarism*, which refers to the glorification of the military, armed forces and weapons and considers warfare the most direct and effective way to counteract a dispute.

International Law

International Law can be defined as "the body of legal rules, norms, and standards that apply between sovereign states and other entities that are legally recognized as international actors"². It serves as the framework consisting of all the rules and principles, which should be followed with no exception, governing the international legal relations. Within the UN, violations of International Law or the UN Charter are addressed only in the Security Council through sanctions.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

¹ "Militarization Noun." *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com*,

www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/militarization.

² Shaw, Malcolm. "International Law." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 7 Dec. 2016, www.britannica.com/topic/international-law.

Weapons of Mass Destruction are weapons with the capacity to kill thousands of people and leave millions injured in only a few seconds and include ***nuclear, biological and chemical weapons***. In the region of the Baltic Sea, the apprehension for a potential nuclear threat is the most urgent one.

Nuclear Weapons

A nuclear weapon can be defined as:” a device that releases nuclear energy in an explosive manner as the result of nuclear chain reactions involving fission, or fission and fusion, of atomic nuclei. Such weapons are also sometimes referred to as atomic bombs (a fission-based weapon); or boosted fission weapons (a fission-based weapon deriving a slightly higher yield from a small fusion reaction); or hydrogen bombs/thermonuclear weapons (a weapon deriving a significant portion of its energy from fusion reactions).”³

Nuclear Reactor

A nuclear reactor is defined as: “A vessel in which nuclear fission may be sustained and controlled in a chain nuclear reaction. The varieties are many, but all incorporate certain features, including: fissionable or fissile fuel; a moderating material (unless the reactor is operated on fast neutrons); a reflector to conserve escaping neutrons; provisions of removal of heat; measuring and controlling instruments; and protective devices.”⁴ It is a system that initiates and controls a series of nuclear fissions. They are used as research tools and most importantly as energy sources for nuclear power plants.

Drainage Basin

Drainage basin or catchment area is the “area from which all precipitation flows to a single stream or set of streams”⁵ The Baltic Sea drainage basin covers an area four times bigger than the sea itself where an amount of 85

³ “Glossary | Learn | NTI.” *Nuclear Threat Initiative - Ten Years of Building a Safer World*, <www.nti.org/learn/glossary/#nuclear-weapon>

⁴ Spinrad, Bernard I. and Wade Marcum. “Nuclear Reactor.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 7 Feb. 2018, <www.britannica.com/technology/nuclear-reactor>

⁵ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Drainage Basin.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 24 Apr. 2014, <www.britannica.com/science/drainage-basin>

million people live. 48% of the area is highly forested, especially in Sweden and Finland, whereas 20% of the Baltic Sea's drainage basin is used for agriculture. The aforementioned area is heavily industrialized.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Baltic Sea has constituted a matter of dispute for years now. Its long domination history begins from the 8th century. In the early middle ages, the Vikings of Scandinavia was a very active and dominant entity in the Baltic Sea, through which they traced their trade routes. At that time, heightened piracy took place in the region.

In the 11th century, Germany dominated a large part of the region surrounding the Baltic Sea, during the German Ostsiedlung (i.e the eastward migration of German-speaking entities). Denmark was a worthy opponent, but after the battle of Bornhöved in 1227, it lost the majority of its possessions.

From the 13th to the 18th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Denmark and Sweden fought for domination in the region. At last, the Sweden Empire added the Baltic Sea in the Swedish Empire and named it "Mare Nostrum Balticum" ("Our Baltic Sea"). In the 19th century, Russia and Prussia with the help of Peter the Great conquered a large part of the sea.

During the First World War, critical battles were held in the Baltic Sea region and, after the Unification of Germany in 1871, the whole southern coast fell to Germany. During the Second World War, Nazi Germany conquered, apart from the southern shore, part of the eastern as well by occupying Poland and the Baltic States.

After 1945, Russia and Poland reclaimed the eastern part surrounding the Baltic Sea and the Baltic States were again incorporated in the Soviet Union. But in 1991, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, all Baltic States were officially independent. Following the 2004 large round of accession to the EU, the Baltic Sea is mostly surrounded by EU States.

However, still, instead of a Sea which is lead by amicable commerce, the Baltic Sea remains an area lead by the intense strategic and geopolitical interests of the surrounding countries and strained relations between the opposing parties are upheld.

NATO presence in the Baltic Sea

Over time, the Baltic Sea has become an area of tension and problems between the Russian Federation and the remaining surrounding countries. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Baltic Sea traditionally was divided to national zones for fishing and exploration of hydrocarbons. However, the Baltic States, namely Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia along with the Scandinavian Countries allege that Russia has violated the Convention by intervening in their maritime territories and airspace. In addition to that, the Russian Federation has also ‘buzzed’ a US Navy Ship above the Baltic Sea, further creating a hostile environment in the Baltic Sea.

In the aftermath of the 2014 annexation of Crimea and Russia’s military approach to Ukraine, the issue of the Baltic Sea has severely intensified and transformed into an area of tension between two axes: Russia on the one hand, and the NATO alliance on the other hand. Indeed, currently all nations surrounding the Baltic Sea are members of NATO, except for Russia, Sweden and Finland, with the latter two being Allies to the NATO. This is key, as NATO is governed by the principle of collective defense, meaning that an attack on one of its members is to be considered an attack against all members and will be dealt accordingly. Whilst Finland and Sweden are not members of NATO and thus are not covered by the alliance’s collective defense principle, they are closely working with it, aiming for a secure and stable Northern Europe.

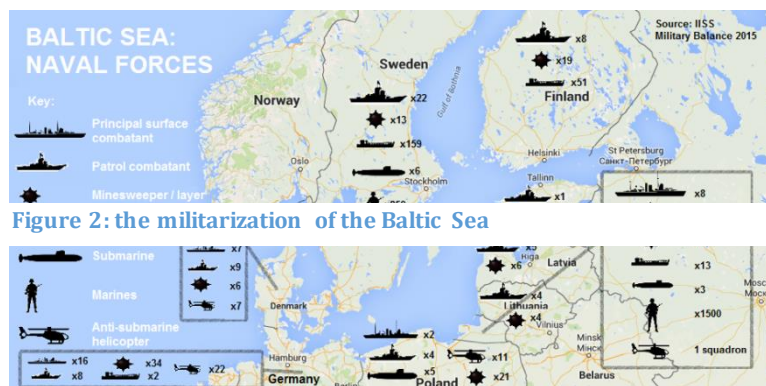
As a result of Russia’s rounds of intervention within the greater region and its opposition to the EU, European States have begun to be cautious of the Russian Federation, and due to the lack of a credible forward-defense system for their territory, NATO has become highly involved in the area. In 2014, NATO upgraded the issue of the Baltic Sea to the top of its security and defense

agenda. In 2016, an extension of the NATO's military presence around the Baltic was decided, under the Enhanced Forward Presence program, with the aim of protecting and re-assuring the surrounding states of their security. The program resulted in the deployment of 4,500 troops to the Baltic nations, with Canada, Germany, the UK and US leading each of the four battle groups. In June 2017, it was also announced that NATO would intensify the land, maritime and air force exercises, in order to fully encompass and defend its member states that are currently in danger.

Western Countries' individual presence in the Baltic Sea

The western nations that surround the Baltic Sea in cooperation with NATO have also located military weapons in the region. Primarily, in March 2016, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden announced their intention to strengthen their defense actions, since Russian military activity in the Baltic Sea region appeared to be significantly increased. The Baltic Sea's militarization by the West can be clearly depicted through the fact that warships both by NATO member countries Germany, Poland, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and NATO members outside the Baltic Sea region have been deployed against the imminent threat of Russia.

A bilateral Naval Task Group, the Swedish-Finish Naval Task Group (SFNTG) highlights that the countries' naval performance capacities are combined and fully operate by 2023. Both marine military bases have an ideally strong capacity and their combination could be deemed formidable.



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The nuclear threat not only does it emerge from NATO and the USA but also from other European nations. Finland has in total 4 nuclear power plant reactors and by spring 2019 the biggest nuclear reactor in the world (Olkiluoto 3) will have been connected to the grid. Additionally, Sweden is in possession of 8 reactors which are fully operating. Lastly, in Poland certain negotiations with China General Nuclear Power Group (CGN) are taking place and the building of the first Polish nuclear power plant in the Baltic Sea is deemed possible. To conclude, no military confrontation in the Baltic Sea can remain nuclear free.



Russia's presence in the Baltic Sea

To start with, the Russian Federation has severely expanded its troops in the Baltic Sea region and improved its equipment, leading to a significant militarization of the region. In this context, Russia's headquarters in the Baltic Sea region, Kaliningrad Oblast

(Oblast=region) is most important. Kaliningrad is the westernmost region of Russia, physically detached from the mainland, located between Poland and

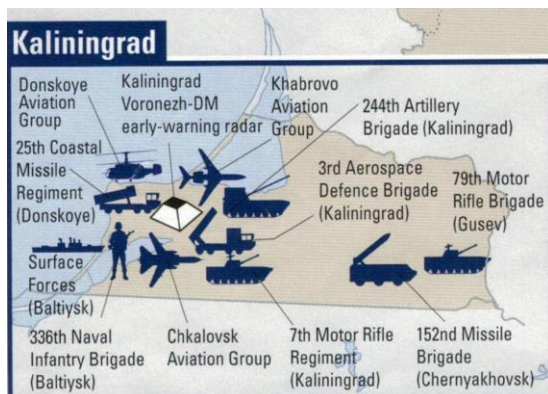
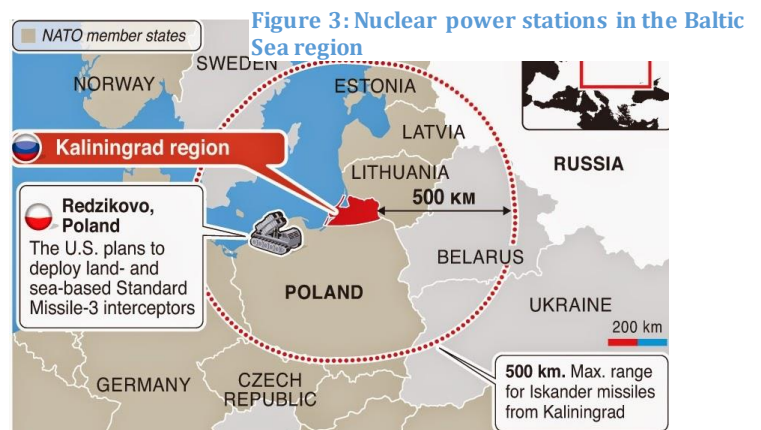
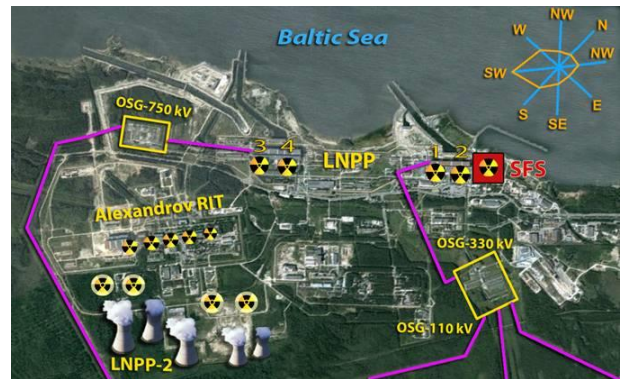


Figure 4: Kaliningrad region and NATO member States surrounding the Baltic Sea

Lithuania in the Baltic Sea. After the Ukrainian Crisis, in 2015 the Russian Federation, on walked out of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), a treaty which highlights the provisions for a military balance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and militarized the region of

Kaliningrad. In October 2016 Russia announced that from Kaliningrad nuclear missiles could be generated. From Kaliningrad, Russia could severely harm Finland in a crisis situation.

Figure 5: The militarization of Kaliningrad region



Moreover, Russian area “Sosnovy Bor” is a crucial threat for all the countries in the Baltic region. It is located at the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland near St. Petersburg, Russia’s second largest city and 90km across the bay of the Finnish town Kotka and classified as a military area where nuclear power plants and different kinds of nuclear facilities are situated. There are 4 operating reactors, 2 are currently being built and 2 more are being planned.

In conclusion, Russian officials in 2017 announced that 40 military bases will be built in the coast of the Baltic Sea, in order to place there the troops that are being deployed. Additionally, the Russian Federation has pledged to using their own military instruments, since, as ambassador Alexander Grushko said in the German newspaper “die Welt” (7.6.17), “NATO is creating a new military security situation that they cannot ignore”.

Figure 6: Sosnovy Bor atom industry complex



Possible / Previous disputes

Oil dispute

The investigation of the United States Geological Survey in 2014 concluded that the Baltic Sea region of offshore Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Sweden holds up to 1.6 billion barrels of technically recoverable oil, of which 82 percent is unconventional. These results instilled disputes between the neighboring countries of the region.

A serious dispute between Latvia and Lithuania took place, as both aimed at access to the resort city Palanga and further acquiring oil reserves in the Baltic Sea for energy independence. Despite a serious conflict in the 20th century over Palanga, the issue is currently closed and thus, no militarization threat is present, especially after their accession to the EU.



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Gulf of Finland

Certain concerns about the maritime safety in the Gulf of Finland have also been raised. Increased shipping activity is detected in the area since 2000, due to the location of the main ports of Finland, Russia and Estonia within the gulf. The rapid growth in the oil transportation and production of the Russian Federation has also contributed to the increase of the shipping activity in the Gulf of Finland. The Gulf of Finland is 400 km long and its width varies between 60 and 135 km, with its narrowness creating issues in conjunction with the increased transportation.

Figure 8: The Gulf of Finland and the bordering countries' port

Russia v. Estonia border dispute

The border dispute between Russia and Estonia refers to a region that does not have direct access to the Baltic Sea. However, it is located in the Baltic region and the dispute over it could prompt the countries involved to heavily militarize the Baltic Sea.

The dispute dates back to 1944, and the annexation of 2,600 square kilometers of Estonian land by the Soviet Union. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 the land returned in the possession of Estonia, yet the dispute continues. After the breakdown of negotiations in 2005, negotiations began again in 2013, resulting in a signed Treaty in 2014. However, the Treaty isn't yet ratified due to tensions in the countries' bilateral relations.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Russian Federation

Figure 3: Map of Estonia, Põlva region depicted

After the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia's only way to access the Baltic Sea was through Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg. Through the Baltic Sea, the Russian Federation nowadays exports gas, coal, oil and electric power to Europe. Thus, its dominant position in the region is important. The Danish Strait in the Baltic Sea is also a region of significant importance for the Russian fleet, but since Denmark is a member of NATO, NATO controls the strait and thus the military traffic in the region. Bearing in mind the fact that Russia is one of the top countries for military expenditure and possesses 7,500 out of world's 15,200 nuclear weapons, the Russian Federation is key in the militarization of the Baltic.



Germany

Germany is a country that has been active in the region of the Baltic Sea, due to both its position within the NATO and desire to be active within the EU. It has consigned warships and other military devices in the region, and is currently leading one of NATO's four troops in the Baltic. However, Germany has also requested the USA to recall the nuclear weaponry from the US nuclear military base in Büchel, Germany.

Poland

Poland and Russia had turbulent relations in the past. Despite the fact that Poland and Russia have been allies in the 1990s through the Warsaw Pact, Poland's relations with Russia became even more strained when Poland decided to join NATO in 1999. In this manner, Poland is currently assisting NATO in the Baltic Sea and its territory is used for various military exercises against Russia. In 2017, NATO battle groups in Poland became fully operational. Lastly, Poland has adopted, as Germany, a negative stance against nuclear weapons.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO is an intergovernmental military alliance. Currently, NATO consists of 29 member countries, these being the Western Countries; including European and North American States. According to its foundation treaty, the Washington Treaty, the alliance's principles are the following: cooperative security, crisis management and collective defense. The alliance considers an attack against one of its members, an attack against all of them.

The increased Russian military activity in the region, in conjunction with Russia's violations of the International Law has forced the NATO Alliance to tighten its military intervention in the Baltic Sea. Taking into consideration that NATO is the biggest nuclear military alliance in the world, with the USA possessing 7,200 out of 15,200 world's nuclear weapons, NATO is also a key player in the militarization of the Baltic.

Figure 4: NATO's logo



TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
April 1949	The establishment of NATO
May 1955	Formation of Warsaw Pact
March 1970	Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) enters into force

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June 1971	“BALTOPS” begin
March 1991	Warsaw Pact dissolves
December 1991	Soviet Union dissolves
1992	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) enters into force
November 1994	UNCLOS enters into force
1999	Kaliningrad region starts witnessing a heavy remilitarization.
27 October 2014	In the 69th session of the General Assembly, the GA1 Committee discussed the need to urge balance of Conventional Forces in Hotbeds of Tension and Latvia, referring to the situation in the Baltic Sea, talked about the necessity to promote confidence and transparency in maritime and air traffic, as well as to coordinate the military activities in a nation’s national maritime territory and airspace.
July 2014	The European Union, the United States, Canada, and other allies and partners enacted sanctions on Russia for its offensive stance in Crimea. After some time, the sanctions were further strengthened and extended.
March 2015	Russia abandoned the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and heavily remilitarized Kaliningrad region
October 2016	Russia’s plans of installing nuclear weapons and missiles in Kaliningrad Oblast were implemented.
July 2017	Chinese naval forces conducted military exercises by Russia’s side in the Baltic Sea

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September, 2017	Aurora: Largest military exercise in the last 23 years by Sweden
2018	Sweden re-introduced its military presence in the Baltic, on Gotland
February 2018	Russia deployed nuclear capable missiles to Kalingrad

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

- **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**

This international UN Convention constitutes the most extensive and elaborative document bringing forward the establishing Laws and guidelines governing the use of world's oceans, seas and their resources. The convention includes certain articles regarding the use of a semi-enclosed sea, as the Baltic, the transportations and placement of military vessels allowed in each country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Entered into force: 16/11/1994

States Parties: 168

- **Decree on the Application of the Act on the Delimitation of the Territorial Waters of Finland (No 993)**

Pursuant to the UNCLOS, the aforementioned decree sets the maritime boundary delimitation for Finland as well as for the countries surrounding the Gulf of Finland. It is the amended form of the Act on the Delimitation of the Territorial Waters of Finland, No. 463, 1956

Entered into force: 1995

- **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**

The NPT is an international treaty of vital importance. It prevents the spread of nuclear weapons and their technology, promotes the peaceful use of nuclear energy and further aims for complete disarmament. Even States that

possess nuclear weapons have signed the treaty and some of them have done painstaking efforts to destroy these highly dangerous weapons.

Entered into force: 1970

State Parties: 191

- **Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)**

It is a multilateral agreement between the USA, the Soviet Union and other member states of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The treaty's purpose is the reduction of military activities and weapons in Central and Northern Europe.

Entered into Force: 1992

States Parties: 30

- **Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof (Sea-Bed Treaty)**

It is a multilateral treaty setting governing rules regarding the exploration and the use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. It further aims for world peace, security and friendly relations between neighboring States.

Entered into force: 1972

States Parties: 94

- **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

It is a treaty that stipulates the complete elimination of nuclear weapons as the only solution in order to avoid the use of such weapons under any circumstances.

Not yet in force

States Parties: 10

- **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**

It implements the ban of the nuclear explosions tests or any other nuclear explosion. It is one of the cornerstones in the effort for complete disarmament and global arms control.

Not yet in force

States Parties: 166

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Many conventions refer to this issue. However, most of them are violated by some States. Many other significant attempts to solve the problem took place, but none of them seemed to be efficient enough to put an end in the violations of Law and strained international relations. Henceforth, sustainable and potent measures should be immediately taken.

To begin with, the Baltic Assembly (BA), consisting of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia considered the demilitarization of the Russian Kaliningrad region noteworthy. It further adopted a resolution concerning the demilitarization of this area but it is conceivable that Russia was not willing to abide by it. Thus, this action of the BA could be evaluated as a promising beginning but nothing more.

Moreover, the US and Russian officials, through their speeches, have demonstrated willingness to cooperate with each other, halt the use of nuclear weapons and military exercises and work for peace. John F. Kennedy was the first one, in 1963 to mention that the Cold War is meaningless. Russian officials imitated him and even, today, Vladimir Putin mentioned that peace should be their utmost priority. Although there was clear intention from both parties to demonstrate a cooperative attitude, these two countries never succeeded in reaching a long-lasting agreement.

Additionally, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has strived to implement peace in the Baltic Sea region. OSCE is the largest regional security organization with 57 member states. Its aims are conflict prevention, crisis management and democracy development. After NATO established its basic principles, namely cooperative security, crisis management and collective defense, OSCE took immediate action. It regarded NATO's principle of collective defense and confrontation logic as the root cause of the Cold War and further, the cause of the militarization of the Baltic Sea. Thus, OSCE made significant efforts to convert the confrontation logic of NATO

to cooperation logic but it didn't achieve its goal. Apart from that, the OSCE has been trying to prevent various forms of silent diplomacy in the region, such as cross-border organized crime, armed conflicts and the use conventional weapons against neighboring countries.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The militarization of the Baltic Sea, a sea surrounded by various countries and millions of people, should be undeniably avoided. Hence, sustainable solutions are vital so that the present militarization is eradicated and no further takes place.

Firstly, the ratification and complete obedience of the States under the UNCLOS is crucial. In this way, all the border disputes and the maritime territory issues, such as the Russian- Estonian border dispute and the difficulty in delineating the sea borders in the Gulf of Finland will be solved. The regulation of each country's economic zone and the distinction of the routes that each vessel follows according to their cargo or their destination would solve some territorial disagreements in the region.

Furthermore, the Russian Federation should be forced to ratify the Estonian-Russian state border and sea boundaries treaty, so that International Law is followed and its principles are implemented. Thus, certain incentives that urge Russia to ratify the conventions should be found.

In addition, no violations of the conventions and the International Law in general should be allowed. The Committee could request the Security Council to discuss the potential imposition of sanctions and embargoes to the countries that have committed a flagrant offence under a legally binding convention as the UNCLOS. Furthermore, in case a dispute between two major countries cannot be solved, the case can be brought up in the ICJ (International Court of Justice).

Additionally, denuclearization and the obedience under the NPT should be definitely encouraged. A big percentage of the militarized regions surrounding the Baltic Sea possess nuclear weapons and the use of them could

be regarded as a huge threat for the lives of millions of people. Thus, the denuclearization and demilitarization of the places that the USA stores nuclear weapons, Büchel in Germany and Kleine Brogel in Belgium and the Russian regions of Kaliningrad and Sosnovy Bor could be requested. Referring to the NPT, the destruction and the ban of the reproduction of nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants are solutions underlined in the convention. Therefore, the State Parties should definitely abide by the convention and thus proceed with the aforementioned actions. Certain punishments should be also found for the countries that although they have signed the treaty, do not abide by it.

Another solution to the problem is the identification of the origin of nuclear explosions, so that the countries that have committed an offence under the NPT are defined. For instance, the development of an international monitoring system is crucial. The identification of explosions happening underground, underwater or in the atmosphere is desideratum. Strong monitoring technologies should detect the energy coming from an explosion and then send the information to a Data Center, which will analyze it and distribute it. On-site inspections could also be considered a possible solution to the topic.

Equally important, an annual conference between the OSCE, NATO, the US and the Russian Federation must be held. It is understandable that the OSCE has done significant efforts to solve the issue and the dispute between Russia and the United States. Thus, an annual conference in the arbitration of the OSCE could be deemed as a critical solution to the problem.

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