

Preface

The October 2013 annual convention of the board of economic issues of the *Forum for 21st Century* has decided to focus on the development in the Arctic. This region has caused increased interest of the international community interrelating with abundance of natural resources, technological progress helping overcome the unfavourable natural conditions, and global climate change which will enable larger economic and transport utilization. Global threats such as environmental pollution, sea level rising, and endangering of flora and fauna, attract attention of increasing number of states, negotiating the territorial dividing of the North Polar Region. The Arctic area has the potential to become the centre of the developed world in few decades to come.

Forum for 21st Century regards this geopolitical issue of major significance, and therefore appeals the member states of the *Arctic Council* and permanent observers to join the negotiations concerning the utilization of the region. We would like to welcome the negotiating parties, namely Canada, the European Union, Kingdom of Norway, Russian Federation, and the United States of America, which are states with dominant influence in the administration of the territory, and the People's Republic of China with the observer status. Their united efforts are going to resolve peace and security in the Arctic area.

Notes

Arctic Council was established in 1996 on account of non-binding agreement of *Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy* (AEPS) as forum promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic Indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on issues such as sustainable development and environmental protection. Members include only states of the Arctic – their territory unfolds beyond 66°33'55'' North Latitude. However, the conflicting area comprises of ca. 13 mil. km² of the Arctic Ocean.

The attempts to resolve the issue reach to 19th century when Arctic countries made their first territory claims. During the Cold War the North Polar Region became space for military bases, modern manufacturing activities, which led to transformation of autochthonous inhabitants' way of life, migration, and destroying of the environment. However, the intensive development of the region was hindered by the extreme climate conditions until the end of 20th century, but according to the statistics the situation changes; field ice in the period of 1979-2000 accounted for 7.04 mil. km² which has decreased to area of 4.9 mil. km². This determines, together with the technological progress, new perspectives in industrial extraction of mineral resources and intensification of transport which triggered political discussions on the territorial matter and attempts to stipulate it in the international law.

The main political disputes started in 2007. Already in 2008, the geological survey exposed possible reserves of natural resources; undersea crude oil deposits of 90 bn. barrels (13 % of world reserves) and natural gas of 47 bn. m³ (30 % of world reserves) could change world energetic balance which takes the focus of transnational corporations.

On the matter were signed several agreements, but most of them non-binding, such as the *AEPS*. The first binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the *Arctic Council* is the *Agreement Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic* (Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement – ASRA). The international treaty coordinates search and rescue coverage and response in the Arctic, and establishes the area of search and rescue responsibility of each state party. In view of the conflicting territorial claims in the Arctic, the treaty provides that the delimitation of search and rescue regions is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of any boundary between states or their sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction.

Targets

The necessity of formal binding act of the Arctic issue is growing on importance together with global climate changes. Due to the recent environmental trend the new economic possibilities are emerging. Not only countries directly bordering the Arctic Ocean have the interest in economic utilization of the North Polar Region. *Forum for 21st Century* takes patronage over the political disputes among the members and permanent observers of the Arctic Council, and other interested parties to resolve the following issues:

1. Political division

The division of the area is one of the most crucial issues concerning the Arctic. The *Forum for 21st Century* believes that it is appropriate to set the criteria for dividing of the North Polar Region according to the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS). The property of the aquatory shall not be of public holding, but in the possession of the Arctic states. Concerning the matter, we support every Arctic Council member's accession to the *Law of the Sea Convention*, which should help determine outlines of the divided aquatories.

2. Security dimension

According to the *Political division*, each Arctic nation exercising its authority over factual divided part of the Arctic area shall prevent military actions to enhance the regional security. In accordance with the international law and the *UNCLOS*, any military action, as a military occupation, is not permitted in the Arctic area. Hence, the only activity of the UN armed forces is permitted, through their visible presence in the region. The *Forum for the 21st Century* suggests to relate to the Antarctic Treaty, which provides only use of military personnel or equipment for scientific research or for any other peaceful purpose. Any confrontation in the North Polar Region shall be avoided and we endorse the idea of maintaining and preserving the region as an area free of conflict, assuring friendly cooperation.

3. Natural resources

The already existing *Antarctic Treaty* may be applied to the Arctic area, as well. Every each Arctic state shall exercise its authority over factual divided part, though any voluntary cooperation between the parties shall not be prohibited. The new industries in the region, including hydropower, mining, tourism, and exploration and exploitation of other minerals, particularly off-shore fossil fuels, natural gas and other energy resources shall be regulated

under the highest international standards, in accordance with queries agreed in the *Environmental issues*.

4. Transport

Existing international law provides a set of rules governing the rights, freedoms and uses of the world's oceans and airspace, including the Arctic. However, *Forum for 21st Century* accentuates the issue of safety, health, environmental, and emergency preparedness and transparency. High international safety standards must be established as for the scientific and commercial purposes, including the land-based and the cruise-liner tourism, and shipping purposes. Therefore we will support agreeing upon limitations of the transport utilization of the Arctic area.

5. Environmental issues

Forum for the 21st Century believes that the environmental issues are of high importance. The protection, safety, and perseverance of the sea environment shall be ensured with commitment to the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act. We suggest building of the *Arctic Research Centre for the Incessant Cooperation* (ARCTIC), which would be active under the *Arctic Council*. This shall monitor the changes in the sea, the impact of the global warming on polar region, and possible effect of the management and the utilization of the mineral resources. ARCTIC shall establish an adequate framework with strict standards to enable an environmentally responsible utilization of the Arctic area.

6. Protection of autochthonous inhabitants

We call upon all parties involved to ensure people respecting all indigenous heritage, spiritual sites, churches, cemeteries and other sites with spiritual, historical or cultural significance, and that they do not remove any artefacts. These shall be protected under the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Nuuk declaration*. Also, we stress the establishment of the *Tribal Consultation Policy* that shall emphasise respect, trust and shared responsibility in protection of the natural resource base used by indigenous people for their economic activity, as well as their traditions, and even of reindeer herding areas. Health, education, culture, sport, child, and youth work and volunteer activities shall all together be the key components with the purpose of fostering the mutual understanding, stability, and development in the Arctic.

7. Establishment of legal binding agreement

Forum for the 21st Century suggests establishing of one legal agreement consisting of all frameworks listed in issues above.

Conclusion

The issue concerning the Arctic area consists of many queries that are interrelated and have to be solved simultaneously. Hence, the board of economic issues of the *Forum for the 21st Century* requires full attentiveness of all engaged parties. Therefore we gladly invite members of this panel, Canada, the European Union, Kingdom of Norway, the People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, and the United States of America, to the negotiations that are taken over patronage by the *Forum for the 21st Century*.