Security Council

MOSMUN XIV

Chair:

Tomás Aristizábal & Sofía Cuéllar

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1. Letter from the Chair.

Dear delegates,

We, as your presidents, are pleased to be guiding this important process with you these following days, to meet as the Security Council, and to develop your capacities to seek and fight for the preservation of human rights, peace, and international security in a world full of strenuous problematics demanding qualified and proficient delegates such as the ones we believe are present in this committee.

We are determined to make this experience one that will strengthen your capacities for conflict-solving, creativity, and critical thinking. Peace-making is undisputedly not an easy duty but we firmly believe that the Security Council has the elements to ensure the demanding needs of this inscrutable world.

It is our mission to wonder about the uncertain future that supersedes us and to make sure we don't commit the same mistakes our predecessors have made. Currently, there are developing

technologies that are several times more powerful than what we can ever imagine. It is our duty to make sure these technologies do not cause harm to anyone.

- We need to be more aware of the decisions we make today because they will have a direct impact on the materialization of our future.
- We want you to enjoy every part of this experience, from the investigation process to the decision-making. This will make the experience one you will not forget.

- Always remember we know what it's like to be a rookie, which is why we understand the fear of raising our placards and asking our presidents questions. Do not be afraid to reach out to us in these moments of indecision, we are here to support you in all you may need.

Thoughtfully,

Presidents Tomas Aristizabal and Sofía Cuèllar.

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2. Introduction to the Committee

a. Historical Context.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the international community decided to create the United Nations (UN), an international organization with the main goal of maintaining international peace and security, and taking effective collective measures to prevent and remove threats to peace. The UN Charter is the UN's governing document, drafted by 50 states in the San Francisco Conference, from April 25 to June 26, 1945, and later signed by 51 nations.

The document established the six main organs of the organization, the Secretariat, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic, and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Trusteeship Council. The UN Charter came into force on October 24, 1945, after being ratified by *China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States* (the 5 vetoes) and by a majority of other signatories. The first session of the Security Council was held on January 17, 1946, at Church House, Westminster, London. Since then, the Council's permanent residence was relocated to the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

b. Purpose, functions and powers of the committee (When there is a presented warlike conflict).

It is for the Security Council to determine when and where a UN peace operation should be deployed. Also, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of

international peace and security, if necessary, force is used, however that is the last resort the UNSC does when there is a conflict.

The Security Council responds to crises around the world on a case-by-case basis, and it has a range of options at its disposal. It takes many factors into account when considering the establishment of a new peace operation, including:

- Whether there is a ceasefire in place and the parties have committed themselves to a peace process intended to reach a political settlement;
- Whether a clear political goal exists and whether it can be reflected in the mandate;
- Whether a precise mandate for a UN operation can be formulated;
- Whether the safety and security of UN personnel can be reasonably ensured, including in particular whether reasonable guarantees can be obtained from the main parties or factions regarding the safety and security of UN personnel.
- The Security Council establishes a peace operation by adopting a Security Council resolution. The resolution sets out the mission's mandate and size.

(UN peacekeeping, n.d.)

The Security Council monitors the work of UN peace operations on an ongoing basis, including through periodic reports from the Secretary-General and by holding dedicated Security Council sessions to discuss the work of specific operations. Lastly, The Security Council can vote to extend, amend or end mission mandates as it deems appropriate.

Under Article 25 of the Charter, all UN members agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. While other organs of the UN make recommendations to Member States, the Council alone has the power to make decisions which Member States are obligated to implement.

In summary, under the United Nations Charter, the functions and powers of the Security Council are:

- To maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
- To investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
- To recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
- To formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
- To determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
- To call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
- To take military action against an aggressor;
- To recommend the admission of new Members;
- To exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in “strategic areas”;
- To recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.

(United Nations Security Council, n.d.)

3. Topic A. Deep Sea Mining as a Threat to the Environment.

a. Glossary

- **Plumes:** Column consisting of one fluid moving through another fluid. For deep-sea mining, it refers to the plume generated by the lifting of sediments caused by disturbances in the deep seabed.
- **Benthic:** Of, relating to, or occurring at the bottom of a body of water.
- **Territorial Sea:** Belt of coastal waters extending at most 12 nautical miles from the baseline (usually the mean low-water mark) of a coastal state.
- **Contiguous Zone:** Area of the sea contiguous to and extending Seward of the territorial sea, in which the coastal State may exercise the control necessary to prevent and punish infringements of its customs, fiscal, immigration, and sanitary laws within its territory or territorial sea.
- **Exclusive Economic Zone:** Region where the coastal State assumes jurisdiction over the exploration and exploitation of marine resources in its adjacent section of the continental shelf, taken to be a band extending 200 miles (321.87 km) from the shore.
- **High Seas:** Open ocean that is not under any country's jurisdiction.
- **Continental Shelf:** Part of the continental margin which is between the shoreline and the shield break, or, where there is no noticeable slope between the shoreline and the point where the depth of the superjacent water is.
- **Abyssal Plains:** Flat areas of the ocean floor in a water depth between 3,500 and 5,000 meters with a gradient below 0.1°. They occupy around 28% of the global seafloor.

b. *Introduction to the topic*

Throughout history, mankind has landed rovers on Mars, taken pictures of black holes, sent humans to the moon, etc. Yet, "80% of the ocean is unexplored" (Petsko Emily, 2020).

The world's oceans could be the key to a green revolution. Mineral demands continue to rise as does the demand for "green"[11] solutions such as electric cars, cellphones, etc, but the availability of materials needed for such artifacts seems to be at risk as the land is running out of resources, they are getting depleted or more difficult to access. Nonetheless, such minerals can be found 200 meters deep in one of the world's most fascinating yet unapproachable places: the Deep Sea.

The existence of mineral deposits became known because of Jules Vene's novel, 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea in 1860 where the existence of zinc, iron, silver, and gold mines were mentioned as "easy to exploit", predicting the excessive amount of minerals and their possibility to satisfy any possible human need. Although he was correct about their abundance, he was certainly mistaken about their accessibility.

More attention was gained in the 1960s when American geologist John l. Mero published "The Mineral Resources of the Sea" in which he stated that the deep seabed could become a major source of supply to meet the world's mineral needs. This made Ambassador Arvid Pardo

[1] Green solutions are defined as technologies, products and processes that reduce impact, directly or indirectly, on the environment or climate compared to current alternatives.

of Malta make a speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations in which he called for the resources of the deep seabed to be designated as the “common heritage of Mankind” and urged for the creation of an international regulation system to prevent developed countries from colonizing the seabed and monopolizing these materials in detriment of developing countries.

In 1970, the General Assembly, in resolution 2749, adopted the Declaration of Principles governing the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor, and the Subsoil Thereof: beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction, which reserved the seabed exclusively for peaceful uses. The Assembly also declared the mineral resources of the seabed as “common heritage of mankind” following the Maltese ambassador’s suggestion.

After this 1970s euphoria, followed by a collapse of metallic ore prices and a very easy access to these minerals in developing countries, seabed mining came as an alternative to keep seeking.

24 years later, in 1994, Ambassador Pardo’s ideas came to exist as the International Seabed Authority (ISA), an autonomous organization within the UNs common system, with its headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica. All state are parties except the USA (that only signed the convention) to the 1982 UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) are members of the Authority resulting in 168 members including the EU. The Authority's principal function is to regulate the exploration and exploitation of deep seabed minerals found in an area (known as “The Area”) defined by the Convention as the Seabed and Subsoil beyond the limits

of each country's national jurisdiction, beyond the outer limits of the continental shelf, amounting a total of 50% of the entire seabed on Earth.

c. *Historical Background*

63% of the world is deep sea. It is the lowest layer in the ocean, below the thermocline (The mid-layer of the ocean where temperature starts to decrease) extending from 200m down to 11km (Mariana Trench).

People have been looking at it as "a potential source of metals and particularly rare-earth elements that are useful to humans and are employed in many electronic devices" (Howell Kerry, 2020). It is a secret to none that globalization and industrialization in the developing world are seeking more environmentally sustainable options to human's current lifestyle. This involves a high and exponential demand for a lot of elements. Alongside new technologies in marine mining, this topic, after being "on hold" for several decades, has arisen and gained interest from both the public and private sectors.

There are three parts of the ocean where mineral deposits can be found: Abyssal plains where Polymetallic Nodules are found (potato-shaped rocks sitting in the bottom of the plains); Hydrothermal Vents containing Polymetallic Sulphides (Rich minerals in underwater volcanoes) and Underwater Mountains with Cobalt crusts (Big mineral rocks sitting in seamounts). In each, there are minerals that could easily satisfy human needs due to their high availability rates, yet,

there will be various repercussions and threats not only to biodiversity, but to technological development as well.

Currently, the deep sea offers "services" to the world:

- **It locks up carbon:** "Marine animals can sequester carbon through a range of natural processes that include storing it in their bodies, excreting carbon-rich waste products that sink into the deep sea and fertilize or protect marine plants" (Pearson Heidi, 2019)
- **Absorbs heat:** Water has a higher heat capacity than air, meaning oceans can absorb more heat and get a smaller temperature increase than air.
- **Recycles nutrients:** The ocean's nutrient cycle allows them to flow through different organisms.
- **Provides shelter to many animals and other forms of life:** "80 percent of life on earth is found in the ocean" (P.Jaksha Amanda, n.d)

With deep-sea mining, all these "services" could be at stake because it disturbs localized ecosystems. We could lose species we didn't even know existed due to burial of organisms on the sediment, accidental suck-up of organisms on sediment, or toxicology generated by the plumes. These species not only represent benefits for the ecosystem itself but also to human health.

One example of this is bacteria from sponges which Professor Mat Upton, a Plymouth University microbiologist, is studying. He analyzed what antibacterial compounds sponges

produce and whether these could be used as natural antibiotics. He hopes to find new antibiotics with the sponge's compounds that could kill bacteria such as Staph aureus or E. Coli.

If these environments are deteriorated by mining, the studies we are doing today will not take place in the future.

There are, on one side, perplexing creatures such as Yeti crabs, giant Tube worms, unique Jellyfish colonies, natural antibiotics, etc. On the other side, we have phones, electric cars, wind turbines, and essentially everything needed for a "greener" future. This paves way for wondering why land mining should be stopped and why deep-sea mining is being considered.

Current land mines dispense many problems to both the environment and health:

1. **Air pollution:** When mining, mineral air plumes can be scattered all over. Toxic elements like Lead, Cadmium, or Arsenic can be breathed and cause many health issues to workers in the mines or people living within a near distance.
2. **Water pollution:** Pollutants released from mines to close streams, aquifers, rivers, or directly into the oceans, present a risk to swimming, fishing, domestic water supply, etc. Many communities do not have access to clean water due to mining.
3. **Soil erosion and damage to land:** entire ecosystems are extinguished when a mining process is started. "Mining now ranks as a substantial cause of Amazon forest loss" (Sonter Laura, 2017). The removal of soil layers and deep mining present a threat to adjacent constructions and even increases the chances of sinkholes formations.

1. **Loss of Biodiversity:** The destruction of the pre-mined habitat presents a catastrophic effect on biodiversity, especially for endemic species since the slightest disruptions in their habitats may result in their extinction.
2. **Child Labor:** In developing countries, children are forced to work in the mining industry and undergo very difficult situations. They "risk death from explosions, rock falls, and tunnel collapse. They breathe air filled with dust and sometimes toxic gasses. Above ground, children dig, crush, mill, and haul ore – often in the hot sun" (ILO, n.d).

▲ Cobalt extraction in DRC has been linked to child labour. Photograph: Sebastian Meyer/Corbis via Getty Images

Taken from: Meyer, S. (s. f.). Cobalt extraction in DRC has been linked to child labour [Photograph]. Cobalt extraction in DRC has been linked to child labour. https://i.guim.co.uk/img/media/7de810f715289e26e7ddddeda437c1dde2be6f48/0_0_5760_3456/master/5760.jpg?width=1020&quality=85&auto=format&fit=max&s=63e912391928d3b9d4c856b74530f3f7

The actual question would then be: can we do a better job in the ocean than the one we have done on land? We need to be aware of the risks and with science, we can think and measure before it is too late. As an example, there is the Plum experiment from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where the impact of deep seabed mining is being researched. (Wang et al., 2021)

d. Current situation

The current situation of deep sea mining is characterized by ongoing debates and concerns about its potential environmental impacts and regulatory framework. While exploratory mining to test equipment has occurred at a small scale, deep-sea mining has not yet been undertaken commercially.

The International Seabed Authority (ISA), responsible for promoting deep-sea mining in international waters, has not finalized its mining code, leading to a lack of guidelines for how mining operations should be conducted.

Furthermore, the potential impacts of deep-sea mining on marine ecosystems and the environment are still uncertain, and there is a growing chorus of voices, including governments, corporations, and experts, expressing concerns about the potential harm to global ocean ecosystems while others claim it is the best solution to extract and commercialize critical and essential minerals.

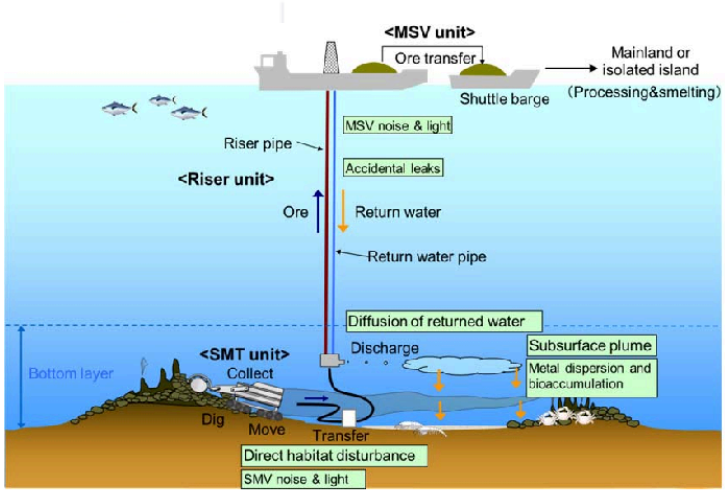


Fig. 14. Environmental impact image by commercial mining (PMS production)

Current status of Japan's activities for deep-sea commercial mining campaign (IEEE, 2007)

N. Okamoto, S. Shiokawa, S. Kawano, H. Sakurai, N. Yamaji and M. Kurihara, "Current Status of Japan's Activities for Deep-Sea Commercial Mining Campaign," 2018 OCEANS - MTS/IEEE Kobe Techno-Oceans (OTO), Kobe, Japan, 2018, pp. 1-7, doi: 10.1109/OCEANSKOBE.2018.8559373.

In addition, the interest in deep-sea mining has grown due to the need for minerals critical to the net-zero transition and the creation of biodegradable materials with zero emotions as in the case of electric vehicles which need Lithium and other minerals to work that are found abundantly on the ocean floor, nevertheless, the environmental impacts and governance of deep-sea mining remain uncertain. The ISA has granted exploration contracts, but no deep-sea mining contracts have been authorized yet.

For example, Japan has conducted a deep-sea mining test within its own territorial waters, known as its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This action has raised concerns among scientists about the unavoidable biodiversity loss from deep-sea mining. While Japan has researched to anticipate the impact of the test on the surrounding environments and has stated that no serious impact might occur, many nations that oppose this practice such as Germany, Spain, New Zealand, Costa Rica, Chile, Sweden, Ireland, Canada, Switzerland, and of course France, have criticized Japan for these practices.

Finally, although The United States' position on deep-sea mining is not explicitly stated, it is known that The Metals Company, a Canadian company involved in deep-sea mining, has sought U.S. government financing for its business. This suggests that there may be some level of interest or involvement in deep-sea mining within the United States. Not only the US and Japan but also China, Russia, South Korea, India, the UK, Poland, and some other countries have supported Japan, and they do desire a law that permits the exploitation of the sea natural resources.

e. *What has the security council done regarding this situation?*

Overall, there have not been a lot of laws regarding this concern because there is still a lot of debate pending , however The Security Council has been involved in debates and discussions regarding deep sea mining. The International Seabed Authority (ISA), which is responsible for regulating deep-sea mining in international waters, has been deliberating on the rules and regulations governing this practice.

In the United States, Representative Ed Case introduced the American Seabed Protection Act, which aims to place a moratorium on deep-sea mining activities in American waters or by American companies on the high seas while a decision on forbidding it or not is approved. This act also tasks the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Academies of Science with conducting a comprehensive assessment of how mining activities could affect ocean species, carbon sequestration processes, and communities that rely on the ocean. (Case Introduces Measures to Halt Deep-Seabed Mining Until Full Consequences Understood and Protective Regulatory Regimes Established, 2023)

With that being said, as there has not been any resolution or international law regarding this practice, any country can do this practice as Japan and Norway are doing at the moment, however no everything has been permitted as the ISA and International Community has some type of power of stopping a country if the nation utilizing deep-sea mining is abusing of the practice, for them not to abuse of nature in the ocean.

f. Resolutions, Treaties, and Agreements.

g. General Assembly Resolution 2749:

UN General Assembly resolution 2749 (XXV) from 1970 on the declaration of principles governing the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, as its name denotes, states the principles that govern the seafloor outside the jurisdiction of each nation. This resolution is not a mandatory regulation, so states can ignore them, but they still use it to have a basis and they should apply them.

It declares resources of "the Area" as "common heritage of mankind", defines the appropriation rules of it, states the purpose of international cooperation for deep-sea exploration, amongst many others.

- United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea:

UNCLOS is an international treaty that was adopted and signed in 1982. It replaced the four Geneva Conventions of April 1958 concerning the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the continental shelf, the high seas, fishing, and conservation of life on the high seas.

It defines coastal and maritime boundaries, to regulate seabed exploitation beyond territorial claims. Not only that, but it establishes general obligations for safeguarding the marine environment and protecting freedom of scientific research on the high seas.

The convention has created three new international institutions: the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority (ISA), and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). (Frakes, 2003)

- International Seabed Authority:

Consisting of 167 Member states, and the European Union, the International Seabed Authority, under the UNCLOS regime, organizes, controls and regulates all mineral-related activities in the International Seabed area for the benefit of humankind as a whole. Therefore, the ISA must ensure efficient protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed exploration and exploitation. (ISA, n.d.)

- The International Seabed authority's Mining Code

The mining code is the set of rules, regulations, and procedures issued by the ISA to regulate the exploration and exploitation of marine minerals in the international seabed Area (seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction).

All regulations, procedures, and rules are issued within the general framework established by the UNCLOS, in particular, part XI on "the Area" and its 1994 Agreement relating to the implementation of it.

Advisors on the code say that perhaps for the first time, rules for an extractive industry can be established before it begins and all impacts can be predicted.

- Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf:

The purpose of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) is to facilitate the implementation of UNCLOS regarding the establishment of the outer limits of the

Continental Shelf. That is beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. The Commission shall make recommendations to coastal States on matters related to the establishment of those limits. Those recommendations shall not prejudice matters relating to the delimitation of boundaries between States with opposite adjacent coasts. (CLCS, 2012)

h. Future expectations

The future of deep sea mining is still uncertain, but in the debates of the Security Council, the future will be written. It is said that in the sessions of the UNSC, it will be stipulated if deep-sea mining will be forbidden or not. The debates will heat up as both sides are very polarized and one of them will want to approve their law regarding this problem.

The debate about deep-sea mining revolves around the need for critical minerals to support the transition to a green economy, such as those required for batteries and other technologies. Proponents argue that deep-sea mining can help meet the world's pressing need for these critical minerals. (Ashford, n.d.) However, scientists have warned of large-scale, severe, and irreversible harm to global ocean ecosystems if deep-sea mining proceeds, particularly due to the lack of sufficient knowledge about the ocean's abyss to draw up effective regulations.

The future of deep-sea mining is further complicated by the conundrum faced by nations worldwide. Transitioning to a green economy requires metals that are not abundant or are hard to access, leading to a debate about the potential benefits and risks of mining the seabed. (Mehta, 2023) Deep-sea mining can have positive effects in a short time, but for some, the long-term effects will not be that positive. In summary, for the decision of forbidding it or not; economic,

social, political, biological and thoughtful considerations have to be taken into account before taking the decision.

i. *(QARMAS).*

- Does your delegation sign or ratify the UNCLOS?
- Is your delegation part of the ISA?
- Does your delegation have seabed-mining permission from the ISA?
- What is the area of your delegation's EEZ?
- Has your delegation conducted or supported any type of seabed mining mission?
- What are the conditions of land mining in your delegation?
- What mineral resources can be found in your delegation? Are they being exploited?
- What is the environmental impact of land mining on your delegation?
- What is the environmental situation of your delegation's seas and oceans?
- Are there any endemic marine species within your delegation's hydrographic zones?

j. *Delegation's position*

United states of America:

Apart from National jurisdiction, the seabed is governed by a comprehensive international regime, consisting of the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, the 1994 Implementation Agreement and detailed rules issued by the International Seabed Authority (ISA). However, the United States has not ratified the treaties, which gives rise to several

questions: does the US find itself in a privileged position, being able to disregard the international regime and to exploit mineral resources however and wherever they please, or should the US be regarded as the odd man out, excluded from deep sea mining activities until they ratify the relevant treaties? . (Willaert, 2021)

According to the United states congress: “Exploration for and commercial recovery of hard mineral resources of the deep seabed are freedoms of the high seas subject to a duty of reasonable regard to the interests of other states in their exercise of those and other freedoms recognized by general principles of international law” (Groves, 2012)

Useful links:

-The U.S. Can Mine the Deep Seabed Without Joining the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea

-Deep sea mining and the United States: Unbound powerhouse or odd man out?

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

The UK government announced its support for a moratorium on the granting of exploitation licenses for deep sea mining projects, it will not sponsor or support the issuing of any such licenses until sufficient scientific evidence is available to assess the potential impact of deep sea mining.

The UK is an international advocate for the highest possible environmental standards and has been pushing the ISA to develop enforceable environmental regulations on deep sea mining. (UK government, 2023)

Useful links:

-Deep sea mining

-UK supports moratorium on deep sea mining to protect ocean and marine ecosystems

- UK backs suspension of deep-sea mining in environmental U-turn

People's Republic of China:

China is intensifying efforts to enter the competition for deep-sea mining of critical minerals, acknowledging a lag behind the West in technology and hardware. According to a China Daily report, the involvement of the China State Shipbuilding Corp, known for deep-sea submersibles, underscores China's commitment to leveraging its exploration capabilities. Also highlights recent developments at the United Nations, where deep-sea mining is exempted from environmental impact assessment regulations under the High Seas Treaty. The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is set to issue an approved mining code soon, with negotiations accelerated to meet a deadline triggered by Nauru. With the deep-sea nodules located at significant depths, China aims to position itself strategically in this emerging sector amidst projections that a substantial portion of critical metal demand will be met by deep-ocean mines by 2065. (*China to Step up Deep Sea Mining Efforts - MINING.COM*, 2023)

Useful links:

-China Leads the Race to the Bottom: Deep Sea Mining for Critical Minerals

-China is set to dominate the deep sea and its wealth of rare metals

-CHINA AND DEEP SEA MINING

Russian Federation:

Russia states that commercial production from deep-sea mining is premature without the establishment of strongregulations.

It argues that the authority's mandate should primarily focus on exploration and exploitation within the designated area. It questions the feasibility of restoring the marine environment to its original state, expressing doubts about the assessment of gender effects in environmental impact statements. (Deep–Sea Mining Negotiations ISA Tracker, 2023)

Useful links:

-RUSSIA – KEY STATEMENTS

- Russia and Ukraine are battling over underwater mines as the global food crisis worsens

The French Republic

French President Emmanuel Macron has made history by advocating for a complete ban on deep-sea mining, a stance he took during the International Seabed Authority meetings in Jamaica. This move aligns with other nations' calls for a "precautionary pause" due to insufficient scientific data and regulatory frameworks. Macron's position reflects France's refusal to support any exploitation lacking a robust legal framework, as stated by Minister Hervé Berville. (Alberts, 2022)

Useful links:

-'Terrifying': WWF chief hits out at plans to mine the deep sea

-G7 countries say strict environmental rules needed for deep-sea mining

-France's Macron says deep-sea mining must not go ahead

-France's Macron joins growing chorus calling for deep-sea mining ban

State of Japan:

Japan is strategically diving into seabed mining for rare earth metals, driven by a mix of economic security and the aim to lessen reliance on China, which currently dominates global rare earth production. Recognizing that a good amount of vital metals lies beneath the ocean, Japan is working towards developing cutting-edge technologies for resource extraction. Encouragingly, successful tests, like extracting up seabed material from substantial depths, signal progress toward Japan's ambitious goal of ensuring a stable supply of rare earths. The nation sees this as a crucial move to safeguard its critical goods and technologies. If these efforts pan out, Japan could shake up its rare earth supply chain dynamics by the end of the decade, making a notable stride toward greater resource independence (Henriques, 2019).

Until the 1970s, all over Japan were mines, oil, natural gas and coal including gold, silver, copper, iron, zinc mining was done on a large scale.

This delegation was the first country to extract an amount of mineral deposits from its deep-sea floor. (N. Okamoto et al., 2018, #)

Useful links:

-Current Status of Japan's Activities for Deep-Sea Commercial Mining Campaign

-Japan's grand plans to mine deep-sea vents

-Japan dives into rare earth mining under the sea

Democratic Republic of Congo:

The DRC's economy is heavily dependent on land-based mining, particularly for minerals like cobalt, copper, and gold. The consideration of transitioning to deep-sea mining would depend on various factors, including the feasibility of such operations, the environmental impact, global market demand for specific minerals, and the evolving dynamics of the mining industry. The DRC might prioritize optimizing its existing land-based mining activities and exploring sustainable practices within its geographical limitations rather than considering a shift to deep-sea mining. (Davie & Ryan, 2022)

Useful links:

-POWERING CHANGE OR BUSINESS AS USUAL?

-How 'modern-day slavery' in the Congo powers the rechargeable battery economy

-Blood cobalt

The Kingdom of Norway:

This delegation is considering the opening of its waters to deep-sea mining. The move is motivated by a desire to reduce reliance on specific countries, for rare earth metals crucial for technological and industrial applications. The Norwegian government sees potential mineral reserves on the seabed, estimating their value to be significant. Concerns about environmental impact and the need for sustainable practices underscore the delicate balance the country aims to achieve in navigating this new industry. (Fouche & Adomaitis, 2023)

Useful links:

-Why does Norway want to mine the seabed?

-Deep sea mining – preparing the ground

-Norway moves to open its waters to deep-sea mining

Canada:

Canada has taken a cautious stance regarding the topic of deep-sea mining, expressing its concerns about its potential environmental impact and advocating for a suspension of this practice until a regulatory framework is got.

The Canadian government, through its foreign affairs, natural resources, and fisheries and oceans departments, has emphasized the need for effective protection of the marine environment, precautionary and ecosystem-based approaches, and science-based and transparent management, for no exploitation of the marine ecosystem to occur.

Useful Links:

- Government of Canada on deep-sea mining
- Canada fears biological devastation with deep sea mining
- Is deep-sea mining imminent

Germany:

Germany has taken a cautious stance on deep-sea mining, expressing concerns about its potential environmental impact and advocating for a precautionary pause until a robust regulatory framework is in place, just like Canada's government.

The German government has declared that it will not sponsor any applications for commercial deep-sea mining of raw materials until further notice, citing insufficient knowledge and research to rule out serious environmental harm arising from deep-sea mining activities. Germany is also urging other member states to follow suit and stop supporting applications as well. Likewise, Norway has proposed opening up a Germany-sized part of the Norwegian Sea to deep-sea mining, but critics say plans should be progressing more slowly to properly assess the marine environment and the possible impacts of mining.

Useful links:

- Germany will not sponsor deep-sea mining
- Norway proposes opening Germany-sized area of its continental shelf to deep-sea mining
- Germany calls for 'precautionary pause' before deep-sea mining industry starts

India:

India has expressed its interest in deep-sea mining and has launched a Deep Ocean Mission to explore the ocean for resources and develop deep-sea technologies for sustainable use of ocean resources. The mission aims to develop an integrated seabed mining system and to encourage marine biodiversity research. India has been among the pioneer countries to work on the deep-sea exploration of minerals, starting at least 40 years ago when the Indian Research Vessel Gaveshani recovered the first polymetallic nodule samples from the Indian Ocean.

Useful links:

- India launches a deep-sea program

- India’s deep seabed mining plans gear up for a dive
- India’s Deep Sea Mining Endeavours

South Korea:

South Korea has also expressed its attraction in deep-sea mining and has successfully tested its first-ever deep-sea mining robot in 2013. This delegation has also secured an exclusive right to explore a vast area of underwater mines in the Indian Ocean by the ISA. However, South Korea's position on deep-sea mining is not clear-cut, as it is facing growing opposition from various countries with whom Korea is pretty much allied, including Canada, Sweden, Ireland, and Switzerland, as well as the UN human rights chief and a major seafood industry group.

Useful links:

- Calls grow to put the brakes on deep-sea mining as countries discuss rules
- South Korea push for deep-sea mining as global talks begin
- Korea successfully tests indigenous deep-sea mining robot: government

Sweden:

Sweden has expressed opposition to deep-sea mining, with calls for Swedish banks to stop supporting deep-sea mining to protect the world's oceans. Additionally, Sweden is among the countries that are against deep-sea mining, as it is facing growing opposition from various countries, including Canada, Sweden, Ireland, and Switzerland, as well as the UN human rights chief and a major seafood industry group. Furthermore, this has also been a fight for years

between the neighboring delegations such as Norway that do want to de this practice and with the Swedish opposition it hasn't been easy.

Useful links:

- Sweden's minerals strategy
- Nations including Sweden proposing a moratorium
- Sweden's role of deep-sea mining

Brazil:

Brazil has urged a 10-year precautionary pause on deep-sea mining in international waters, expressing concerns about the potential environmental damage caused by extracting precious metals from the deep sea. With this being said, Brazil believes that the current level of knowledge and best available science are insufficient to approve any seabed mining projects in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Useful links:

- Brazil wants a ten-year pause to deep-sea mining
- Deep–Sea Mining Negotiations ISA Tracker
- The rich ecosystem and minerals found in the seabed of Brazilian water.

Nauru:

Although Nauru is a minuscule Pacific island nation, it has triggered an obscure legal provision that may allow it to start deep-sea mining soon. Nauru has been working with Canada's The Metals Company, which has widely promoted its plans to extract deep-sea minerals for

Glencore Plc and others. Nauru's government sees rare earth metals as a key component in the green energy transition, but conservationists argue that mining the ocean floor will threaten vital marine ecosystems.

Useful links:

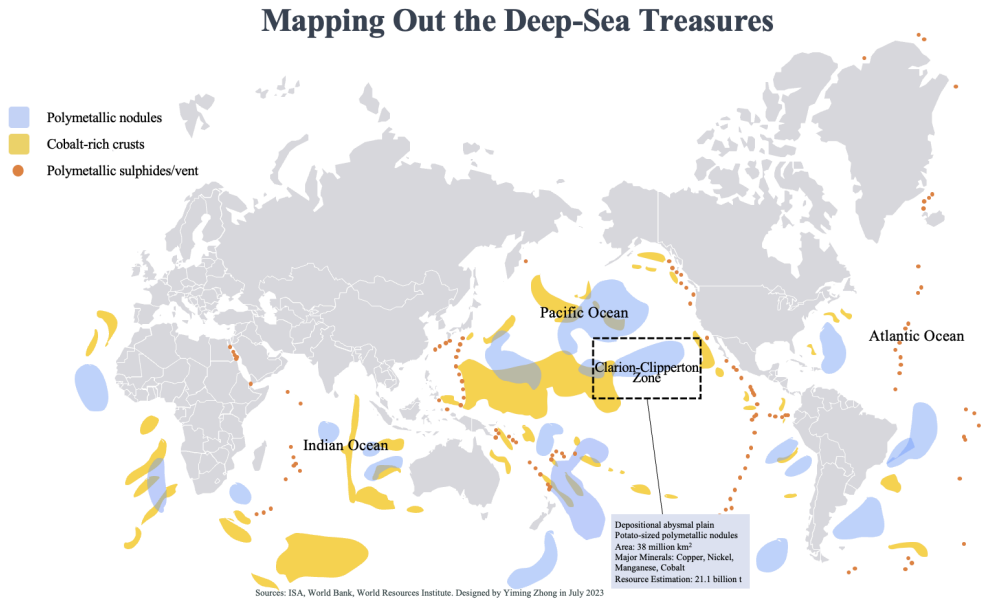
-Nauru prepares to mine deep seas in big climate controversy

-Race to the bottom for deep-sea minerals centres on tiny Nauru

-Deep-sea mining could start in two years after Pacific nation of Nauru gives UN ultimatum

k. Expectations for the debate

In this ongoing debate of the Security Council, the United Nations expects that the delegates can reach a final decision on the future of deep-sea mining, dividing the debates in sections considering; economic, social, political, and natural aspects to see if this has a contra-producing outcome or not until a resolution or a working paper is done regarding this practice. Finally, determining what will happen with the sea-rich mineral areas as shown in the following picture:



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4. Topic B. Open Agenda

a. Explanation of the Open Agenda

The Open Agenda is a mechanism that is meant to challenge the chair, the delegates, and the Security Council itself. Aware of the heightened difficulty of the Open Agenda in a Security Council, the chair would have some potential Crises/topics to be addressed in the Committee. Each of them with a high relevance and the chair would decide which would be presented and delegates would have to be prepared for whichever crisis appears.

We hope that the delegates are prepared to whichever of the three topics appears and ready to discuss them. All of them have a big relevance so they must be disposed to discuss them and if there is enough time, make resolutions or working papers about it. The importance is for them not to talk about irrelevant things, but they can focus on the crises exposed that day.

b. Possible topics

Transnational organised crime at sea as a threat to international peace and security.

Perhaps the most commonly used definition of transnational organised crime is the one from the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; UNTOC defines an 'organised criminal group' as "… a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences … in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit." (C & Edmunds, T, 2023)

Serious organised crimes or offences take place transnationally, on, in or across the maritime domain and cause or have the potential to inflict significant harm, a common challenge for law enforcement is that many countries do not have appropriate legislation in place to effectively deal with criminality at sea. Activities which are commonly conceived to be transnational crimes (particularly environmental crimes such as illegal fishing) are often either treated as minor civil offences or are not punishable at all (Vrancken, 2023). Such limitations have been recognised in recent maritime capacity building work by international actors, which commonly focus on strengthening the legal capacities of states to deal with such practices according to international standards and conventions (Guilfoyle, 2012) . While the victims of such crimes may sometimes be clearly identifiable, they may also result in wider social, economic and environmental harms, which usually are collective, long-term or even non-human in nature.

There are different types of organised crimes at sea, but the main focus will be human trafficking and piracy.

Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit. Men, women and children of all ages and from all backgrounds can become victims of this crime. (UNODC, n.d.)

Piracy as the Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea states, is: “Any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft [or the associated participation in such activities], and directed on the high seas [or in a place outside the jurisdiction of a state] against another ship or aircraft” (United Nations, 1982)

“Two centuries after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, at least 20.9 million people continue to work under coercion, largely in the informal and illegal economy (ILO, 2020). About 90 per cent of today’s forced labour is extracted by private agents, primarily in labour intensive industries such as manufacturing, fishing, agriculture and food processing, domestic work and construction.” (International Labour Office, 2013)

Israel-Hamas conflict..

All the problems started when the UN passed the 181 resolution, creating two states, one Jewish and another Arab to contain both Jews and Arabs who were established in the area we

know. The latter had been living there for centuries, while the Jews had just started arriving two decades ago, waking up anger and a feeling of unfairness towards the Arabs.

This partition plan generated two years later some wars which the newly born, state of Israel won, taking even more land that was owned by the Arabs, also leaving a small strip known as Gaza. The city of Gaza was separated from the rest of the territory, urging the Palestinians to do something to protect their people living in that portion of land.

The current conflict itself, between Hamas and Israel, is rooted in a complex history that spans decades. Hamas, a Palestinian militant group, was established in 1987 to protect Gaza, which was a portion of territory surrounded by Israel. During the first Palestinian uprising as a response to the Israeli occupation and the secular approach of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Hamas's founding document rejects the idea of a two-state solution and advocates for the establishment of an Islamic state in historical Palestine.

In 2006, Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections and seized control of the Gaza Strip, leading to a blockade by Israel and Egypt. Hamas has since engaged in several conflicts with Israel, including the 2008-2009 Gaza War and the 2014 Gaza War. In 2023, Hamas launched a major attack on Israel, resulting in a significant loss of life on both sides. Israel responded with airstrikes and a ground assault, leading to a humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The conflict is also influenced by broader regional dynamics, including the support of Iran for Hamas and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The United States, the European Union, and other Western countries have condemned Hamas's attack on Israel, while Iran and Russia have maintained contact with both sides in the conflict

The future expectations are uncertain, but there are a couple possibilities. Israel's leadership is unlikely to allow Hamas to retain power in Gaza, and there may be a shift in governance, potentially involving greater control for the Palestinian National Authority based in Ramallah, some sort of new local governance, governance under the tutelage of the Israeli military, or perhaps a coalition of Arab states. However, the hostage situation and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza may complicate these plans.

Hamas's attack has been a strategic miscalculation, and the group has faced internal disagreements as they consider next steps. Israel's leadership is focused on freeing hostages and defeating Hamas, while the military is intent on restoring the public's sense of security and returning evacuated civilians to their homes. The political leadership has yet to decide what comes next in Gaza after Hamas.

The engagement of criminal groups in cyberspace due to digitalization of the black market.

The black market has been incorporated into the international community since even before the creation of the United Nations. In a way, the digital black market always existed in the known form of the dark web. It provides access to the purchase of illicit information and services which is why data is being stolen. However, in the past there were still some limits to the exchange that took place on this dark web; there was no legal tender for these purchases as all these operations took place in anonymous, untraceable networks and websites. (Keene, 2019)

With the efflux of cryptocurrency, the digitalization of the black market resumed as direct transactions took place easily. All types of purchases are now being seen on this new web. With technological advancements comes the difficulty of retracement and regulations for all purchases and interactions, especially in a digital black market. It is a type of expansion from the known unfindable "dark-web" laws and mandates that must be imposed before the steady establishment of this complex network. We know that what includes distribution and regulations of organs, human trafficking, or drugs in the black market is a problem that is constantly discussed. It is familiar yet essential, so we wish to show how new wireless transactions and their simplicity owing to cryptocurrency and information theft contribute to the Black market. (Sen, 2021)

As current societies become more reliant on personal information for day to day activities like: shopping, travelling and social assistance. Society has also advanced on a more computerised scale, where “dark web” has been an important resource to exploit vulnerabilities in security for criminal groups. As this problem expanded, so did legal measures, which now encompass personal identity theft as a crime, not only illegal actions subsequent to the theft. (UNODC, n.d.)

c. *Useful links*

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- Dominion of Canada – Syrian Arab Republic
- Federal Republic of Germany
- Federative Republic of Brazil
- French Republic
- Kingdom of Norway – State of Israel
- Kingdom of Sweden – The Islamic Republic of Iran
- People's Republic of China
- Russian Federation
- Republic of India
- Republic of Korea
- Republic of Nauru – State of Palestine
- State of Japan

- United States of America
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